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The General Staff and its Problems

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The History of the relations between the High Command and the German Imperial Government as revealed by Official Documents

By General Ludendorff

Author of "My War Memories, 1914–1918"

Translated by F. A. Holt, O.B.E.

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THE GENERAL STAFF AND ITS PROBLEMS

CHAPTER VII

OUR RESERVE ON THE QUESTION OF THE FRANCHISE

"The First Quartermaster-General.

"G.H.Q.,
"26/11/1917.

"To the Minister of the Interior.

"Your Excellency,

"I am informed by a deputy in Berlin that Minister Doctor Friedberg told another deputy that Main Headquarters had expressed the view that 'universal suffrage must be accepted at once by the House of Deputies and the resistance of the Upper House must be broken down by the intervention of the Reichstag in order to prevent strikes.'

"I cannot unfortunately doubt the fact that this or some similar expression has been attributed to me, as my representative is prepared to vouch for the truth of it with his name.

"Since no one knows better than Your Excellency that I have never spoken to you in that or any similar sense and that moreover I regard the reason put forward (fear of munition strikes) as absolutely groundless, I must request Your Excellency to take action against this rumour in every sense. I may remark moreover that I have always insisted, even in dealing with the

Imperial Chancellor, that Main Headquarters is extremely anxious at all costs to be left out of discussions on questions of domestic politics, and that no one has any right to claim its support on any matter or in any direction. I should be extremely grateful to Your Excellency if you would proclaim this when dispelling the rumour to which I have referred above.

"With the assurance of my highest regard, etc.,

"LUDENDORFF."

I received the reply of the Minister of the Interior as early as the 29/11/17, and it completely explained the affair.

I replied on the 8/12/1917.

"G.H.Q.,

"8/12/1917.

"TO THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR.

"I am extremely grateful to Your Excellency for your letter of the 29/11. I am very glad that Herr Friedberg and you are willing to contradict the rumours in question. The information of which I spoke was communicated to me by Geheimrat K. with the kind intention of preventing Main Headquarters from being drawn into the conflict of opinions on questions of domestic politics. I assume that my giving his name will have no unpleasant consequences for him in the later stages of the affair.

"Even if the correspondence between Your Excellency and myself results in keeping Main Headquarters out of domestic politics, will you permit me to make to you personally certain observations on a general point in your letter which seems to me of decisive importance. Your Excellency will not take it ill of me to express myself frankly.

"Your Excellency seems to show that the refusal of universal, direct, equal and secret suffrage might provoke strike movements on a large scale and thereby involve the loss of the war. With a view to preventing such strikes it is said that the federal

Governments would have to agree to a proposal of the Reichstag to make it compulsory for all the states of the federation to introduce the Reichstag franchise.

"This could mean nothing else than a declaration of bankruptcy on the part of the Government. In view of the whole situation, moreover, does Your Excellency think such an attitude is imposed upon you in order to avoid a catastrophe?

"I cannot see that you are under any such compulsion.

"In my view the danger of general strikes or considerable disorders does not exist. In the first place, the propaganda for so great movements would not have the success which is feared. The great majority of the nation is much too intelligent and patriotic for that. The only requisite is that the Government itself remains firm. But it is also wrong to attribute such unpatriotic intentions to the labour leaders, for such a movement would be against their own interests, as it would be the working classes themselves who would be the hardest hit by a lost war. The German workman must sink into poverty if we are not victorious. All the labour and other leaders with whom I have spoken have confessed that frankly. But in an emergency we must employ all our resources against illegal movements.

"Thus in my opinion we have no reason whatever to allow ourselves to be influenced in questions of policy by the fear of general strikes. We must be guided solely by the requirements of the general good. Your Excellency will permit me a few general remarks on this subject.

"I believe personally that the war has really given us no grounds for a move towards democratization and parliamentarization. The state of affairs in enemy countries which are democratically governed can offer us no inducement to imitate them.

"On the contrary I believe that the policy of concessions to the 'spirit of the times' is fraught with the greatest danger. Its consequence must bring us down to defeat. That is proved not only by history but to a certain extent by the previous

course of our domestic affairs. To postpone the recovery of control by the Government until after the war is simply to delude oneself with impossibilities. I may remind Your Excellency that it was the conciliatory attitude of the former Imperial Chancellor, von Bethmann-Hollweg, towards the parties of the Left which I regarded as a reason for hailing his leaving office as a relief.

"Our policy must remain above parties and indeed lead them. This applies with double force in view of the difficult financial, economic and social condition in which we shall find ourselves after the war. I cannot see how the Government will solve this problem by perpetually giving way and turning to the Left.

"I know that it is said of me that I am an uncompromising opponent of political and social reform. That is not true. For instance, in the questions of population, housing reform, the matter of settlements and provision for the disabled, I have always impressed upon the authorities concerned the necessity for wholesale changes. But of course I regard those 'reforms' as false which merely do us harm.

"This it is which I considered I ought not to keep back from Your Excellency. My remarks are, of course, only addressed to you personally. In dealing with everyone else I have always adhered to the principle that I had no opinions on matters of domestic politics. This is particularly true of the suffrage question. But to all who have asked me whether the General Staff feared the danger of a strike, I have, of course, replied that in my opinion the danger was non-existent. I could not keep silence on this point, for, unlike the suffrage question, it is a matter of the greatest military importance.

"With sincere respect, etc.,

"LUDENDORFF."

Correspondence with Deputy Herr Stresemann.

"Berlin,
"April 29th, 1918.

"To General Ludendorff, First Quartermaster-General.

"Will Your Excellency allow me in a few lines to lay before you my views and anxieties on a question which is of importance to the development of our political future, both at home and abroad.

"It is rumoured in both Reichstag and Landtag circles that there will be no dissolution of the Prussian Chamber of Deputies in case the Government Bill for equal suffrage is thrown out, because the General Staff opposes that course. Men point out that Main Headquarters declares that from the military point of view a suffrage contest could not be allowed during the war, as it would adversely affect our *moral* at the front. For that reason the elections must be postponed until after peace.

"It will not surprise Your Excellency that these motives, if they are given correctly in this form, are not judged objectively in all quarters, and as a result even now the popular slogan of the extreme Left parties is going round: 'Hindenburg and Ludendorff are against the equal suffrage.' That cry is likely to have a most deleterious effect on the national determination to conquer.

"Permit me also to deal objectively with the obstacles which in the opinion of Main Headquarters stand in the way of a suffrage contest during the war. I am not ignoring the very regrettable and disintegrating effects of such a contest, and myself expressed the hope not long ago that it would be possible to secure agreement between the Government and the parties, since only Messrs. Lloyd George and Clemenceau would derive any satisfaction from a fight over the suffrage question. But if, as appears likely, agreement is impossible,

I ask you not to forget that the intolerable tension which would follow the rejection of the Bill would dominate opinion at home to the very last day of the war. While at the moment all eyes are turned to our external war aims, and the majority of July 19th has been broken up as the result of the great impetus given by the moral effect of our victories on the German nation, the rejection of the equal franchise would put the suffrage question in the very front of our home political platform at a blow, and thereby give fresh strength to the July 19 group. The 'Berliner Tageblatt,' 'Vorwärts' and 'Germania' of Herr Erzberger could win no greater triumph than to see the suffrage question dominate the home life of Germany to the end of the war, so that all parties—those which are wholly as well as those which are mostly in favour of the equal suffrage, among them the National Liberals—would be driven on to the side of that majority, while the exigencies of the times demand that the suffrage question should disappear from among the controversies of the day, so that all the moral forces of the nation may be concentrated to exploit the German victory for the purpose of building up a greater Germany, and so that Herr Scheidemann and his *status quo* policy may once more be as completely isolated as was the case in the first years of the war. But I cannot too often repeat that nothing would interrupt this process more effectively than permanent agitation over the rejection of the Franchise Bill as the result of postponing the necessary decision.

"However undesirable an election might be on account of its effects on foreign counties, there can be no doubt that it could be carried out in a relatively short time and without much disturbance. Thanks to the three-class franchise, the Prussian elections have certainly never produced much excitement. In all cases in which two candidates, both in favour of the franchise, fought each other previously, the party truce would be preserved, so that there would be no election at all. There would be contests in only about 75 constituencies, as the

decision depends upon but a few votes. After a month of excited Press comment peace would reign once more and we could concentrate all our energies on preserving the national determination to win and keeping the way open for matters of external politics.

"But as one who has insisted on the untrammelled authority of Main Headquarters in hundreds of meetings, I must here and now utter the most solemn warning against the General Staff allowing itself to become involved in domestic political battles. Hitherto the 70 million Germans have found themselves united beyond the frontiers of political parties in their trust in Main Headquarters. All the efforts of individuals to shake that confidence have hitherto been condemned to futility. But if men in wide circles of public life come to know that the General Staff is resisting the dissolution of the Landtag, it would be easy for the Socialists and other demagogues to proclaim that Main Headquarters is acting as a shield for the Conservative Party and is itself supporting the resistance to equal suffrage. You can appreciate the influence such a battle-cry can have merely by recalling that in the South German States there is practically no opposition to the equal suffrage, while in Prussia eighty-five per cent. of the electors are in favour of it. The universal confidence which Main Headquarters now possesses will be shaken for all the great questions of foreign politics in which its views are of vital importance, and the credit for this change would be claimed by the friends of a peace of renunciation.

"I beg Your Excellency not to think ill of me for laying my anxieties before you fully and frankly. During this world-war I believe I have devoted all my energies to supporting the General Staff, so that it is impossible to misunderstand my position. All the more do I feel it my duty to raise a warning voice, so that my silence at least shall not make me partially responsible for the fact that passions may be roused against Main Headquarters which have hitherto, I am glad to

say, been doomed to silence, thanks to the influence of the unlimited confidence of the nation in the General Staff.

"With the greatest respect, etc.,

"STRESEMANN."

Reply.

"DEAR HERR STRESEMANN,

"I thank you for your letter and straightforward manner, as I appreciate all frank confidences.

"You know that I never think of anything but final victory and only express opinions on questions of domestic policy (however closely they may affect me) to the Imperial Government when they seem to me to be prejudicing that final victory. My acts of commission and omission are determined by that test.

"With greetings, etc.,

"LUDENDORFF."

CHAPTER VIII

THE CREATION OF THE KINGDOM OF POLAND

Speech of the Imperial Chancellor, von Bethmann-Hollweg, in the Reichstag on August 19, 1915.

"Our troops and those of Austria-Hungary have reached the frontiers of congress Poland on the east, and the task of administering the country falls to both of us. For centuries geographical and political destinies have compelled Germans and Poles to fight each other. Memories of that age-long hostility do not diminish the respect for the sufferings, patriotism and obstinacy with which the nation defends its ancient western culture and love of liberty—and continues to preserve even through the disaster of this war—against all that Russia stands for. I will not imitate the deceptive promises of our enemies; but I hope that the present occupation of the Polish eastern frontiers will represent the beginning of a development which will transform the old opposition between Germans and Poles and bring a happy future to the land now freed from the Russian yoke, a future in which it can cultivate and further the genius of its national life."

Speech of the Imperial Chancellor, von Bethmann-Hollweg, in the Reichstag on April 5, 1916.

"It has never been the intention of ourselves and Austria-Hungary to shelve the Polish question. The fortune of arms has shelved it. And now it stands in our path and awaits a solution. Germany and Austria-Hungary will and must solve it. After such incredible happenings history will not

recognize the *status quo ante*. The Poland which has been abandoned by the Russian tchinovnik, extortionate to the last, and the Russian cossack who burned and plundered her, is no more. Members of the Duma have themselves publicly declared that they cannot imagine the return of the tchinovnik to a region where the German, the Austrian and the Pole have meanwhile co-operated honourably for the good of the country. Mr. Asquith talks in his conditions of peace of the principle of nationality. When he does so and puts himself in the position of the unconquered, unconquerable enemy, can he really think that Germany will voluntarily surrender to the rule of reactionary Russia the peoples—whether they be Poles, Lithuanians, Balts, or Letts—between the Baltic and the marshes of Volhynia whom she and her ally have liberated? No, gentlemen; Russia must never again concentrate her armies on the defenceless frontier of East and West Prussia, and never again, with the help of French gold, use the Vistula region as a gate of entry into an unprotected Germany."

Extract from "The Responsibility for the Restoration of Poland," by Professor Dr. Delbrück-Schäfer. Article from "Deutschland's Erneuerung," monthly periodical for the German nation. Published by T. F. Lehmann, Munich.

"Practically immediately after the joint conquest of Poland (Ivangorod was occupied by the Austrians on August 4, 1915, Warsaw on the 5th by the Germans), Austria-Hungary approached the German Government with the demand that the so-called 'Congress Poland' should be annexed to the Hapsburg Monarchy.

"Immediately after the military successes in August and September, 1915, Professor Dr. Sering, of Berlin University, travelled through the recently occupied territories at the request of the Government. He had conducted a party of young economists on a tour in Russia shortly before the war,

and was therefore regarded as an authority on affairs in the East. The report on his tour was made at the end of September, 1915. Professor Sering then remained in close touch with the Imperial Chancellor and the Governor-General in Warsaw, His Excellency von Beseler. In July, 1916, appeared a memoir, of which he was the author, which sought to secure the future of Poland in close contact with Germany. It was concerned practically exclusively with the economic position of the country, and strove to show that the economic dissolution of Russia was not so difficult a matter as is generally believed, and that a customs union with Germany offered advantages which seemed likely to make good the loss. In any case, from the point of view of Polish economic life, dependence on Germany was greatly preferable to dependence on Austria-Hungary. But an indispensable condition precedent to her prosperity was that Poland should push eastwards beyond the frontiers assigned to her by Russia, and acquire fresh territory in the sparsely populated and little developed regions of White Russia and the Ukraine. It is true that the memoir demanded military security for East and West Prussia by the transfer of the frontier to the line of the Narew, but it also put forward the view that Poland must be as strong as possible in order to be an effective bulwark against Russia. 'For protection against Russia Germany needs an eastern neighbour whose army, a considerable one, is closely associated with the German army. Germany must desire a strong Poland which develops to the full her rich intellectual and economic resources, and for that reason welcomes the association. *Under the protection of mighty Germany which will further the development of Poland in her own interests, Poland will be able completely to fulfil her historic mission of defending Central Europe and its culture.* If we give Poland room and a broad sphere in which to expand in the sparsely populated regions of the East, the last motive for the hostility of former times will vanish.' "

Minutes of the Negotiations at Vienna on August 11 and 12, 1916, between the Imperial Chancellor, von Bethmann-Hollweg, and Baron Burian.

"What is aimed at is a mutual agreement that an independent Kingdom of Poland shall be set up, with a hereditary monarchy and a constitution. An announcement by the two allied monarchs of their intention to establish this national State is to follow as soon as possible, while the actual constitution of the State must remain in abeyance until some later period—after the war. During the war itself Poland must remain occupied territory or a Lines-of-Communication area, as the case may be. In this connection a desire is expressed that the customs and traffic barriers which now separate the German and Austro-Hungarian areas should be thrown down as soon as possible. The two Governments will enter into negotiations on this point.

"Decisions will be taken later on as to the precise demarcation of the frontiers of the new State which will be formed primarily out of Congress Poland. The German Imperial Chancellor declares that for the military security of the frontiers of Germany certain portions of present Russo-Polish territory would have to be annexed, but that this would be limited to what is absolutely necessary for military reasons. The Government of Suwalki would not form part of the new Kingdom. Baron Burian declares his adhesion to this decision in principle, and on his side also reserves the right to the necessary military rectifications of frontier in favour of Austria-Hungary. He also expresses a desire that those portions of Lithuania with a predominantly Polish population —in particular the city of Vilna—should form part of the Polish State. The German Imperial Chancellor agrees in principle with that view. Finally, the Polish State is to be extended as far east as possible, so far as that can be secured in the peace with Russia.

"The internal administration of the political State is left to the State itself, except during the necessary transitional period. As regards foreign relations Poland will be associated with the alliance of the two Empires. *Poland cannot pursue a foreign policy of her own.* The limitation of Poland's right to diplomatic representation can be left for further consideration. Poland can only be allowed to conclude treaties with other States in so far as the contents of those treaties are not in conflict with the limitations imposed by the agreements between the two Central Powers. For that reason such treaties must be laid before the two Powers.

"Poland will have her own army. The necessary unity, both as to its composition and the joint organization of the common military system, will be secured by a mixed military commission. Baron Burian will press the view that the training and high command of the army should be uniform and assigned to Germany. The conclusion of the necessary military convention with Poland by both the Central Powers will be carried out on the basis of these principles.

"As regards the economic aspect, the German Imperial Chancellor points to the necessity of the incorporation of the Polish State in the German customs area, more particularly from the point of view of the vital economic interests of the Polish State itself.

"Baron Burian, on the other hand, puts forward the view that both Empires must have equal economic rights in Poland, but that a customs union of Poland with Germany would not only be prejudicial to the interests of Austria-Hungary, but politically harmful; for this reason Poland should form her own customs area. It is agreed that the question of the practical effect of the different customs systems is first to be examined by experts. Baron Burian promises that such experts shall be sent to Berlin as soon as possible. It is suggested that the Polish railways, which were almost entirely Russian State property, should be turned into a limited company. The

shares would be divided between the two Central Powers according to the quota of the War indemnity.

"The two Central Powers mutually guarantee by special treaty that no part of their former Polish possessions shall be surrendered to the State of Poland."

Extract from "The Responsibility for the Restoration of Poland," by Professor Dr. Delbrück-Schäfer.

"On October 21st, 1916, a fortnight before the proclamation, the Imperial Chancellor summoned to a conference the Ministers of the Interior, Finance, Public Works and Agriculture, Secretary of State von Jagow, Under-Secretary of State Wahnschaffe, General von Beseler, Governor-General of Warsaw, as well as the following members of the Upper House, Prince von Hatzfeld, Count Arnim-Boitzenburg, Count York von Wartenburg, Herr von Buch, Count Behr-Behrenhoff; also Herrn von Batocki, Krupp von Bohlen and Halbach and the Oberbürgermeister of Posen, Wilms. The conception of a Polish State was put forward in a speech of an hour and a half by General von Beseler. 'The actual existence of such a State cannot be allowed to be dependent upon subsequent peace negotiations; something definitive must be brought into being. The present moment seems particularly propitious for such a step. The military reasons for the step are imperative. We are counting on four divisions from voluntary enlistments and subsequently a substantial force to be employed even in this war. Main Headquarters regard its creation as absolutely necessary, and demand it without more ado. Public opinion in a large part of Poland in the General-Government of Warsaw is favourable to this step, and will carry the bulk of the rest with it.'"

CHAPTER IX

OUTLINES OF A SCHEME OF PATRIOTIC EDUCATION FOR THE TROOPS

"Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army.
"No. III. b, 11567/11.
"*For official use only.*

"G.H.Q.,
"29/7/1917.

"In accordance with the instructions of the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army, No. III. b, 11450/II. Secret, of 17/7/1917, Paras. 4 and 5, I submit the following observations, based on the conference of the education officers on the western front.

"OUTLINES OF A SCHEME OF PATRIOTIC EDUCATION FOR THE TROOPS

"I. The Importance of Patriotic Education.

"The spirit which inspires the German army has made it superior to all its enemies and the backbone of its allies.

"At the beginning of the war this was the result of the enthusiasm of the men and the habit of discipline acquired by a long peace-training. The three years of war have modified and extended this foundation. A natural longing for home, family and the old calling may paralyse the fighting

spirit and sap the will to endure until decisive victory is secured.

"The long war has also imposed growing privations and sacrifices on the home country and the troops. The heavier the weight of these burdens on the spirit of the army, the greater is the necessity that conviction, duty and whole-hearted resolution should become the army's weapons.

"To realize that aim is the object of patriotic education for the troops.

"II. Organization.

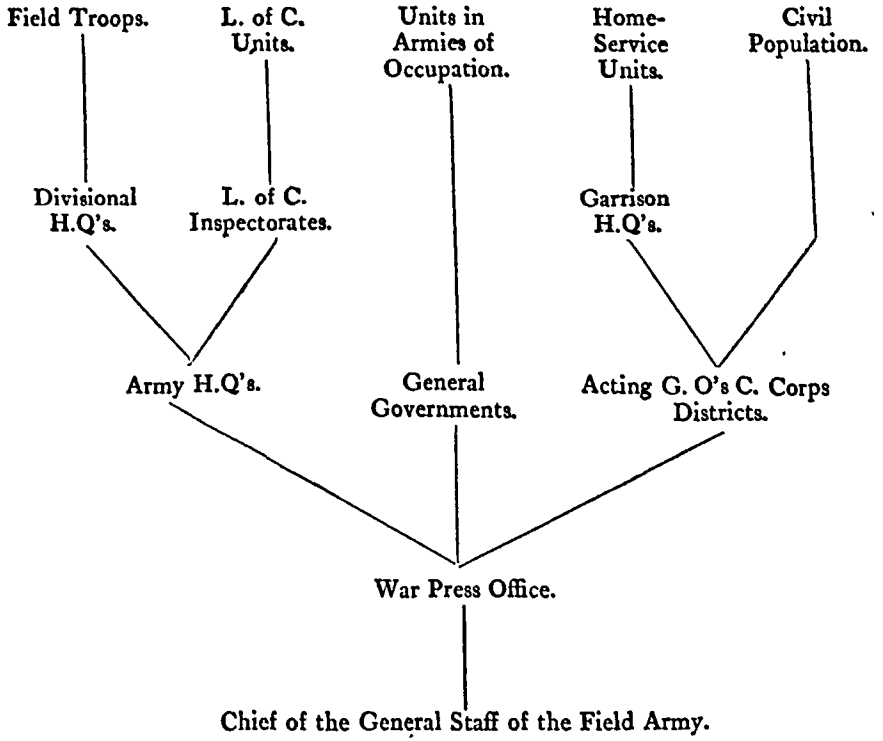
"1. The co-ordination into one central organization of the numerous systems of patriotic instruction which are already at work in most of the armies should not hamper the individual efforts, but rather help them by making the general experience gained available for all.

"The spirit of the army depends on that of the public at home and vice versa. For this reason patriotic propaganda at home must be brought into line with that in the army.

"2. Army Headquarters Staffs, the General Governments and the acting G. O's C. of the corps districts at home are responsible for patriotic education of the troops under their orders. The method to be adopted must be left to them.

"3. The officers appointed by the decree of the Ministry of War, No. 3523/6 Mob. A, of the 9/7/1917, as 'Directors of Propaganda to the Troops' are the advisers on patriotic instruction at Army Headquarters. It is of vital importance to their success that they should be suitable for their work. That means absolute devotion to duty, intelligence, energy and personal conviction of the importance of the work, tact, familiarity with political and economic problems and, above all, knowledge of the army life and atmosphere. It is advisable that the directors of propaganda should be attached to the General Staff. Further, the N.C.O's appointed as clerks

must be suitable for intellectual work, and not mere writing-machines.



"4. It is advisable to set up a single, permanent organization at Army H.Q's, Divisional H.Q's and L. of C. Inspectorates. In these authorities the machinery of executive command, welfare work, supply, medical service, and so on, is centred, and in this way it will be possible to make full use of the divisional organization. Further, dissipation of effort and interference with the system of command can be avoided by this method. Within the divisions or L. of C. Inspectorates the organization of patriotic instruction may well be adapted to the particular circumstances.

"5. In the units themselves the responsibility for propaganda work rests with the commanding officer as the fountain of authority. Every C.O. must make it his business to look after the patriotic education of the men under his command. Without the vigorous support of all those holding positions of

command the efforts of the education authorities will be in vain.

"N.C.O's and men who are suitable for the work may be called in to help their officers; they should not be allowed to act on their own responsibility.

"6. The organization will be on the following lines.

"III. Method of Operation.

"1. Everthing which is likely to prejudice the *moral* of the troops, e.g., leaflets sent down from the air by the enemy or sent out from home, must be kept at a distance. With regard to the censorship of letters and the personal behaviour of officers, see the enclosed Routine Order of the Quarter-master-General, Va 1739, of the 25/7/1917.

"2. Propaganda work should not try to drive natural currents of opinion underground, where they would only work mischief in secret, but should counter and silence the voice of scepticism. It should not bluntly deny what is generally believed, whether rightly or not, but should rather bring enlightenment and eliminate the false and harmful elements. A longing for peace is a natural emotion, but the sense of duty and determination to conquer must be even stronger.

"Every statement made by way of explanation or enlightenment must be absolutely pertinent and accurate. The success of the educative scheme will depend upon growing confidence.

"3. In the first place, we must find out what questions are agitating the minds of the men and which of them require elucidation. In this matter the army and the public at home are in close touch, and thus education at home and in the army must proceed side by side. The information collected should be communicated to the War Press Office. The War Press Office collects the material for patriotic education and forwards it to the places where it is required via:

"(*a*) The organs of the War Press Office ('Deutsche Wochenschau' and 'Deutsche Kriegsnachrichten');

"(*b*) Pamphlets;

"(*c*) The Field Press Office at Charleville, for articles and information from the occupied areas in the west;

"(*d*) Photographs and posters such as the troops are likely to understand;

"(*e*) Leaflets from aircraft.

"Further, the directors of propaganda will keep the War Press Office informed of their experiences in their work. The War Press Office will collate this information and circulate 'Hints on Patriotic Propaganda (M.v.U.)' to all units. In this way all will get the benefit of experience.

"The War Press Office will also distribute material which experience with the public at home shows is suitable for patriotic instruction among the troops.

"4. Army Headquarters will decide which part of the material issued from the War Press Office shall be used among the troops. If the Directors of Propaganda at Army H.Q's are to be able to survey the whole field of the troops' requirements they must keep in close touch with the Divisional Staffs.

"5. For propaganda among the troops the material will be communicated by:

"(*a*) Lectures, evening talks, field cinemas and theatrical performances, for which the Military Department of the Foreign Office will provide the necessary material through the medium of the War Press Office;

"(*b*) The chaplains;

"(*c*) Army newspapers, the circulation and proper distribution of which must be controlled;

"(*d*) Field libraries (if possible, one for each formation);

"(*e*) Field bookstalls, the supervision and control of which will be the duty of the education officer.

"The men in the line and those in rest camps must get the main benefit of the arrangements for providing mental recreation and brightening their lives.

"6. When patriotic instruction is given discussion must not be permitted. On the other hand, it will be advisable to have question-boxes and allow interviews, at which replies can be given on all questions which relate to the domestic affairs of the individual soldier.

"7. Reliable men home on leave may profitably be employed in imparting such news of the army as is likely to raise the spirit of the public at home. The War Press Office will take care that the home population is educated on questions which are the subject of patriotic instruction in the army.

"8. Though based on these general principles *patriotic propaganda must be adapted to local requirements* and a cut-and-dried syllabus avoided. It would be a mistake if the instruction propagated ideas which had never entered the men's heads.

"IV. Subjects for Propaganda.

"1. It is advisable to confine patriotic instruction to essential points, but to emphasize and return to these time after time and concentrate the machinery of instruction upon them.

"2. The vital subjects of patriotic propaganda are:

"(*a*) The Causes of the War. The economic development of Germany, its importance and the consequences of a lost war, particularly from the point of view of the German working classes. The necessity of continuing the war until the enemy's determination to destroy us is broken and the future of our economic development is secured.

"(*b*) The magnitude of our victories hitherto justifies confidence in final victory. Confidence in victory, devotion to duty and manly pride are to be encouraged. The issue is already turning in our favour. Our business now is to settle it once and for all. The conditions

precedent have been fulfilled. The supply of material and ammunition is secure. The U-boat campaign is having an ever greater effect.

"(*c*) The necessity and importance of *leadership* in all departments (the army, the Government, civil administration, industry and commerce). Hence the necessity for *authority* on one side and *obedience* on the other must be pointed out. There must be unflinching confidence in the Emperor and the princes of the Federal States, as well as the military leaders.

"(*d*) The enemy, convinced that we cannot be beaten in the field, is placing all his hopes on our economic and political collapse and the defection of our allies.

"Difficulties of the economic situation, especially food and coal, are obvious and admitted, particularly at home, but they will certainly be overcome. The necessity for rationing food and coal by official measures should be explained. Mistakes have been made in the past owing to the original failure to grasp the magnitude of the task, and frequently owing to the effort to be absolutely fair all round. Ways and means to an equitable and prudent distribution of supplies will be sought and found. Occasional hard cases are inevitable, owing to the conflicting interests of producers and consumers.

"The ill-feeling between the towns and the country will be remedied. Mutual understanding and help are required. Profiteering is a detestable phenomenon. The end of the war will not mean the end of economic difficulties. Grumbling does no good; everyone must help in production. Selfish interests must give way to our great common aim. Strikes menace our prospects of victory and cost lives at the front. Dreams of peace and unrest only prolong the war. Unity at home is strength, everything else weakness. We must understand our allies and appreciate their achievements.

"(*e*) We must make it clear that when our enemies realize that the war has no prospects for them they will try by 'peace negotiations' to snatch the fruits of our victory from us, and in particular to strangle our economic development. Every soldier must realize that in that case we must be prepared to fight on to attain our goal, i.e., an assured future. The public and the army must line up strong and united behind their leaders until the final conclusion of peace.

(Signed) "P. p. LUDENDORFF."

Enclosure 1.

"The Quartermaster-General.
"V. a, No. 1739, Secret.

"G.H.Q.,
"25/7/1917.

"An attempt at political propaganda among the formations of the field army is being made in many and various quarters.

"For instance, one journal has directed its attention exclusively to service men, with the object of taking a vote on war aims. Moreover, we are now certain that the Independent Social Democratic Party is carrying on a campaign in the army which is in the highest degree prejudicial to discipline. The sharpest possible measures must be taken against this sort of thing. In particular, it is important to prevent leaflets and printed matter from reaching the troops which are likely to undermine their confidence in their leaders, and would thus have fatal effects on the army's striking power.

"Thorough instruction of the men by their officers and the issue of orders to hand over all printed matter of this type are the first and best counter-measures to this species of propaganda. If officers continue to realize that their first duty is to win and maintain the confidence of their men by

personal example and the concern and consideration they show for those under their command, in my opinion *that* is the best guarantee we can have that these dangerous influences will find no welcome among the troops.

"I consider it desirable that the censorship of letters, in accordance with the order of the Chief of the General Staff of 29/4/1916—M.J. 30061—should be occasionally used to give the higher commands an insight into the currents of opinion among the troops. The officers appointed to examine the letters should be selected with particular care in view of the responsible nature and importance of their duties.

"Please let me know the result of your investigations.

(Signed) "HAHNDORFF."

Enclosure 2.

"Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army.

"No. III. b, 12503 II. Secret.

"G.H.Q.,

"15/9/1917.

"Several reports on the educative work among the troops, which was started in pursuance of the order of the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army, No. III. b, 11567/11, show that this work is in progress everywhere, arousing great interest and developing rapidly.

"In order to keep this enterprise on the right lines I will again direct attention to the Outlines to be found in the memorandum I have referred to.

"The following points, which have cropped up, seem to me worthy of attention.

"It has been stated that the term 'work of enlightenment' is liable to misconstruction, and might easily be associated with political questions or seem to imply political propaganda. In order to make the functions of this branch of the service quite clear it is suggested that the terms 'patriotic education'

should be substituted for 'patriotic propaganda' and 'education officer' for 'propaganda officer.' I agree with this suggestion and request that these designations may be employed in future.

"What is needed is education in patriotism such as we used to give the army with a view to strengthening the love of country and the spirit of self-sacrifice among the troops. The fundamental principles on which this educative scheme is based, principles which are the outcome of the war itself, are not wholly familiar to the officers concerned. The whole object of creating one uniform organization is to supply them with the material they require and instruct them in their duties.

"Further, a uniform system alone will ensure that the troops will be instructed on right lines and by the right men. The control of this service by officers to whom it is entrusted, the participation of officers of high rank in the training of the personnel and supervising their work, is a guarantee that the limits of the scheme will not be exceeded.

"I cannot meet the wish that has been expressed in certain quarters that the directors of this branch of the service at divisional headquarters should have their own special staffs. Only at army headquarters do the duties make it necessary for them to have special officers for directing and supervising the work. The selection of these officers is of vital importance (Sec. II. 3). The greatest attention must always be paid to this aspect. Generally speaking, the work of patriotic instruction must not be left exclusively to special officers, but rest upon the broad foundation of the corps of officers and other suitable instructors.

"According to Sec. III. 4, of the Outlines, the selection of the material is subject to the approval of Army H.Q's. Pamphlets are, in general, to be used for the edification of the instructional staff only, and not circulated broadcast among the troops themselves. But it will be advisable

for this kind of material to be on sale in the field bookstalls also.

"The education officers primarily devote themselves to the training of instructors in patriotic education; at the same time they must not take everything upon themselves, and should personally try to keep in the background. It is not enough merely to train a few special officers, but endeavours should be made to train *all* officers and other suitable personnel for this branch of the service. How far this can be done depends on local requirements and individual circumstances.

"It is also important to remember that patriotic education should strengthen, not loosen, the bonds of discipline. This aspect of the matter imposes limits on the co-option of N.C.O's and men for this work.

"The depots are a permanent connecting link between the front and the home country. Experience has shown that they are the breeding-ground of all kinds of evil influences and exaggerated rumours. For this reason patriotic instruction in the depots is of special importance.

"The mutual interaction of army and homeland is referred to in Secs. II. 1 and III. 3 of the Outlines. In spirit, and from the point of view of the patriotic tasks which face us, the nation and the army are one. The result is that it is of the greatest importance to stir the fires of patriotism, as the civil authorities are now doing. The military authorities at home must render all the help they can in this direction.

"The influence of labour units from home in the war area must not be overlooked.

"Inquiries have been made as to what attitude has been taken up by the Patriotic Education organization towards the question of war aims, a matter in which the troops take the keenest interest, thanks to the Press, etc. The discussion of war aims is not in itself within the sphere of patriotic education. On the other hand, it may well be—

and no one could reasonably object—that officers have been approached in confidence by their men on questions relating to war aims and have given their own views on this point in some unaggressive and practical form.

"Doubts have also arisen as to whether the encouragement of the men to invest in war loan should be included among the aims of patriotic education, or whether such a course is liable to create an impression that this is the definite purpose of the scheme, thus reducing its chances of success. I cannot accept this objection. The atmosphere of general confidence in the future of the Fatherland which patriotic education is intended to create will, on the contrary, exert a favourable influence on the success of the war loan among the troops and at home. Patriotic instruction and war-loan propaganda are working for the same end. Unity of aim and a tendency to supplement each other's efforts will be the natural result.

"It has been pointed out, and with justice, that the victories we gain in the different sectors of our far-flung battle-front must be fully exploited at the time for propaganda purposes among the troops which have not directly contributed to them and therefore have not felt their inspiring influence. The same remark applies to the successes of our submarines.

"The enemy's determination to destroy us and the necessity to fight on is not realized so vividly by the men on the lines of communication, on garrison duty and home service, as by those at the front. It is thus necessary to devote special attention to the spirit of the L. of C. troops, and efforts at patriotic instruction should be addressed to them more than anyone. In existing circumstances it is inevitable that the L. of C. troops should get a far larger share of the benefits to be derived from the innumerable welfare organizations than the units at the front. Without neglecting the L. of C. troops, recreation, in the way of theatres, lectures, etc., should be provided as near to the front as possible.

"Lastly, the question has been raised whether this education organization should be kept secret. There is no reason for secrecy.

(Signed) "P. p. LUDENDORFF."

Enclosure 3.

"Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army.
"III. b, No. 13320/II.

"G.H.Q.,
"14/11/1917.

"As a result of the discussion on patriotic education on 4/11/1917 at Charleville and 5/11/1917 at G.H.Q., a definite 'Syllabus' (Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army, III. b, No. 13140/II.) has been drawn up. This 'syllabus' contains important hints to directors of patriotic education. I wish to call attention to them.

"Supplement to the 'Outlines' of 29/9/1917 (Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army, III. b, No. 11569/II.), Army H.Q's are also to be responsible for the patriotic instruction of *all* G.H.Q. reserves under training in so far as the training grounds are in their army areas.

"Further, the General-Governments of Belgium and Warsaw, in co-operation with the Prussian War Minister, are to include all troops stationed within their area, even though not directly under their command, in their organization for patriotic instruction.

"In the case of field railway units, the responsibility for patriotic education is in the hands of the Director-General of Military Railways alone. For purposes of patriotic education the units under his authority will be incorporated with the General-Governments or Army H.Q's in whose area they happen to be stationed.

(Signed) "P. p. LUDENDORFF."

"Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army.
"II. No. 4123, Secret.

"G.H.Q.
"31/7/1917.

"*Personal.*

"A memorandum on propaganda work in the army (III. b, No. 11567/II., of 29/7/17) will shortly be issued to the higher formations, down to and including Divisional H.Q's, with a view to maintaining the fighting power of the army at a high level.

"I should like to draw attention to the following points:

"The *moral* of the public at home has fallen to a low ebb. In view of the intimate connection between the army and the nation at home, the army cannot remain unaffected in the long run.

"At home shameless profiteering and pleasure-seeking, the gambling spirit, pessimism and forgetfulness of duty—not to mention sheer selfishness—are rampant and endangering the issue of the war. These phenomena can be traced in part to real hardships, such as the serious food and coal situation, financial worries, the length of the war, loss of relatives, etc. They are mainly due, however, to the deliberate agitation of certain revolutionary elements who are unscrupulously exploiting these hardships to further their political ends and are endeavouring to provoke discontent, anti-war feeling, in every possible way. Our people are obsessed with vulgar cares, and seem barely able to realize the meaning of these great and fateful times and all that our army and the fleet have accomplished. They are wearing themselves out in futile talk instead of bearing the inevitable burdens of the war cheerfully and resolutely, or in a manner worthy of their fighting sons.

"Public opinion at home has in some cases actually infected

the army already, as countless letters show. Moreover, an endeavour is being made to impair the fighting spirit of the army by direct suggestion. All this cannot be allowed to continue unchecked. Our duty is to revive and preserve the fighting spirit of the army, and with it that confidence in victory which the situation fully justifies. We have to feed the flames of devotion to the Emperor and the national leaders, rekindle the fervour of German patriotism and see that the army takes the lead in a campaign against the agitators, gamblers and weaklings, both at home and in the army itself. And all this without turning a blind eye to the critical situation at home.

"I must ask that this extremely important matter should be looked into with the greatest care. The line to be adopted will be found indicated in the above-mentioned Memorandum III. b. I must also ask that close touch should be maintained with the recently appointed education officers and that their wishes and suggestions should be met as far as possible.

"I reserve the right to issue educational matter bearing on the same topic for general use.

"I also recommend that commanders of troops, and especially officers commanding regiments, should co-operate in this work. Within the units themselves I think it would be advisable to take for educative purposes particular aspects, such as the personal duties and obligations of the individual at the front and at home.

"As soon as a certain measure of success has been attained orders will be given for certain men, who are suitable from the point of view of convictions and capacity, to be sent home on leave with a view to raising and vitalizing the *moral* of the general public. If their officers exert a sympathetic influence on these men, both when they start on and return from their leave, it will have a very good effect. I must once again insist that this is a problem of immense importance and

that it cannot be solved without firmness, tact and prudence.

"I must ask all army commanders to confer together on this matter.

"Copies of this letter have been sent to corps and L. of C. commanders and senior general staff officers with divisions.

(Signed) "P. p. LUDENDORFF."

CHAPTER X

EXTRACTS FROM PRESS AND PROPAGANDA RECORDS

"Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army.
"III. b, No. 8769/II. Secret.

"G.H.Q.,
"17/12/1916.

"To the Imperial Chancellor.

"In my letter III. b 7909/II., of 7/11/1916, I called Your Excellency's attention to the fact that in my opinion not sufficient notice had been taken of the instruction issued by the German censorship departments for the handling of the situation arising out of the Polish manifesto.

"As the military departments concerned with the press have once more received only inadequate and belated instructions with regard to the peace offer of the 7/12, I cannot refrain from submitting the following points for Your Excellency's consideration.

"The importance acquired by the press during the war, and to an increasing extent in the present stage, is recognized on all sides. The Imperial and State departments have intimate relations with the German Press and supply it with information reflecting their own individual points of view. The German Press is certainly showing that it realizes its rôle. The propaganda department set up by Your Excellency in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has given

increased attention to the Press of foreign countries, and with good results.

"These growing activities of individual departments in the domain of Press control and direction involve a danger of overlapping and dissipation of effort, particularly as the individual Press authorities are only lightly staffed and in consequence of the increasing burden of work the staffs only find time to attend to the interests of their own departments.

"What is wanted is a single central direction of this political and military instrument, the power and importance of which are continually increasing as the war goes on. The general conferences in the Reichstag, at which representatives of the different Press departments are present, cannot be regarded as constituting a uniform control. Here again the representatives of the various departments act independently without any previous consultation.

"The number of departments which have relations with the Press has been increased by the creation of new departments during the war.

"The result is that all these authorities do their work, conscientiously of course, but without any common aims or principles. But in dealing with the German and foreign Press it seems to me of the utmost importance there should be some such principles. A firm directing hand in Press matters would also materially facilitate our general policy, even towards our allies.

"May I suggest that Your Excellency should establish a central organization for this purpose as soon as possible. Of course we must take care that we do not simply add a new Press authority to those already in existence and thus increase the present complications. What is wanted is something quite new—a central authority with powers of control over the various Press departments, receiving their suggestions, co-ordinating their efforts; an authority responsible for unity of

action and to which would be assigned the special duty of issuing prompt and far-sighted instructions and taking decisions when events of unusual importance take place.

"In view of its functions this central authority should be under Your Excellency's direct control. To my mind it should be a department of the Imperial Chancery as the Press section of the Foreign Office is chiefly occupied with the special interests of that office.

"In case Your Excellency should be thinking of summoning a conference of representatives of the departments concerned (among which I include those of the Federal States also), I should be glad if a representative of G.H.Q. could be invited. Your Excellency may rely upon my readiness to support any proposal designed to secure uniform and centralized administration.

(Signed) "LUDENDORFF."

"Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army.
"No. 28826 P.

"20/3/1918.

"TO THE IMPERIAL CHANCELLOR.

"I have informed the War Press Office of Your Excellency's decree, No. 58/18 of 28/2/1918, of which a copy was forwarded to me, with regard to the organization of business for the Press Director attached to the Imperial Chancellor, and have given instructions that it is to keep in close touch with the Press Director in carrying out its duties.

"I cannot regard such measures as have been adopted hitherto as meeting that necessity for a uniform control of the Press and for the enlightenment of public opinion in Germany, among our allies and against the enemy, which I pointed out with some emphasis to Your Excellency's predecessors in my letters No. III. b 7909/II. of 7/11/1916, III. b 8769/II. of 17/12/1916 and III. b 11804/II. of 9/1/1917.

"The situation has since developed in a way which reveals the inadequacy of the measures we have taken.

"The peace negotiations with our enemies in the east have in a certain sense taken German public opinion by surprise. If they are to be understood by the nation and public opinion is to be as unanimous as possible, the latter must be enlightened and directed on a scale that has not been realized hitherto.

"The pending negotiations in the west will bring us face to face with a much more complicated situation, during which an attempt will be made in the east to reopen discussion of the questions already settled. In these circumstances we must make it our business beforehand to secure unanimity of opinion among the great majority of the public.

"The Press is only one of the instruments that can be used to this end. But even in this department I cannot see that the necessary direction of public opinion has been adequately realized. Your Excellency's Press Director still combines with his duties as such the office of Director of the Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office. While the situation is making ever greater demands upon him in his second capacity the sphere of general propaganda is growing simultaneously.

"Our enemies have fully realized the importance of prompt and extensive preparations for the last phase of the military and political struggle.

"In England the department for propaganda in enemy countries has Lord Northcliffe at its head, a man who is free from bureaucratic ties and particularly well equipped for his task both by experience and reputation. He will devote himself to it with ruthless energy, unhampered by other considerations. To assist him Mr. Robert Donald has been appointed Minister of Propaganda for neutral countries and Mr. Rudyard Kipling Minister of Propaganda at home. In the same way

France and America are said to have appointed Ministers of Propaganda.

"In Austria-Hungary too, in an interpellation by Deputy Mikla and others to the Minister-President on 22/2/1918, the creation of a propaganda department attached to the Minister-President's department was suggested.

"I take the liberty of enclosing a copy of this question. As regards any such organization, developed by the war, we are seriously behindhand. I cannot refrain from pointing out that since 1916 I have repeatedly urged that something of the kind should be done, and that it would have been quite possible for us to have been ahead of our enemies at the present time instead of lagging behind them.

"My view is borne out by the enclosed proposals of Lieutenant-Colonel von Haeften, director of the Military Section of the Foreign Office. I entirely agree with Lieutenant-Colonel von Haeften's suggestions. His proposals for the creation of a kind of Imperial Ministry of Propaganda seem to me worthy of very serious consideration. Whatever form it may take the task requires undivided energies. An organization which is merely an annexe of some Imperial department or the Imperial Chancery, which is already overworked, will not meet the difficulty. The Director must be in constant touch with the representatives of all classes and callings; he will frequently have to make public speeches at a moment's notice and take sudden journeys, so that he must not be hampered by other duties. He should not be closely identified with any particular political party. For these reasons the proposal that Secretary of State Dr. Solf should be appointed to this office has my warmest approval, as I know his energy, eloquence, knowledge of the world and prestige, both at home and abroad. I should be only too glad to give him the services of Lieutenant-Colonel von Haeften as his Chief of Staff, a man whose outstanding qualifications, years

of experience and valuable connections make him particularly suitable for this work.

"The Military Department could be detached from the Foreign Office and occupy the same position under the Ministry of Propaganda as it has hitherto held under the Foreign Office. With its excellent organization it would at once be a splendid instrument in the hands of the new Secretary of State. Moreover, at the present time it is the only organization which is wholly concerned with propaganda; it alone controls all the machinery of propaganda (Press, advertisements, films, oral propaganda, posters, art propaganda).

"May I beg Your Excellency to consider my suggestions and act upon them at an early date. In order to accelerate an early decision I recommend that the principles and methods to be adopted by the Imperial Ministry of Propaganda should be settled at a conference, to be called as soon as possible, of all the departments concerned.

(Signed) "P. p. LUDENDORFF."

LETTER FROM DEPUTY MIKLA AND HIS ASSOCIATES TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE MINISTER-PRESIDENT, RELATING TO THE CREATION OF A PROPAGANDA ORGANIZATION ATTACHED TO THE MINISTER-PRESIDENT'S DEPARTMENT.

"According to newspaper reports the English Government has appointed Lord Northcliffe, a member of the English Cabinet, as Director of Propaganda in enemy countries. By the latter is meant the Central Powers, Bulgaria and Turkey. The obvious intention is to extend the efforts to influence world opinion (efforts which England has been making since the war began with unexampled skill and a total lack of scruple) to us also, and to a greater degree than hitherto. The affair is to be organized on the grand scale and the armies facing England and her minions at the front are to be taken in the rear. Perfidious and brutal Albion seems to have made a

dead set at our Imperial Austria, where unhappy symptoms have been revealed in public life ever since the war began, and increasingly during the last few months. These symptoms could not be adequately explained without reference to the secret and open propaganda of the enemy, whose silver bullets have been pouring forth and whose agents have unfortunately made their way even into our country. The present military situation of the Monarchy and the delicate domestic position make it impossible to give further details. It is only natural that the loyal population of the Empire and the armies fighting at the front desire to be certain, and *must* be assured, that everything possible to defeat the enemy's efforts is being done by the Government, and that our defence against this hostile propaganda campaign is organized with the same energy and singleness of purpose as our defence in the field. In view of the large scale on which the enemy propaganda is planned it is obvious that our defence can only be successful if it is based on broad modern methods which are carefully adapted to the aim in view. It would perhaps be best to take the financial resources required, which will necessarily be considerable, from the general military credits available for the prosecution of the war, as this is essentially one aspect of Imperial defence.

"In view of the extraordinary importance and urgency of the matter the undersigned address the following questions to His Excellency the Minister-President:

"1. Would Your Excellency be willing to instruct all public authorities to show greater zeal in watching secret and open propaganda in Austria and, where necessary, to take counter-measures without delay?

"2. Is Your Excellency willing, with the approval of the Imperial and Royal Government, to create a propaganda department attached to the department of the Minister-President, the special and exclusive function of which would be the most vigorous defensive and offensive measures against

the propaganda with which the enemy is seeking to undermine the foundations of the Austrian Imperial State?

" Wilhelm Mikla.

(Signed):

" Dr. Fuchs.	" Eisenhut.
" Ferd.	" L. Diwald.
" Berger.	" Jukel.
" Parrer.	" Nidrist.
" Alvis Brandl.	" List.
" Meixner.	" R. Gruber.
" Zaunegger.	" Wollek.
" Kienzl.	" Höher.
" Guggenberg.	" Schraffl.
" Schoiswohl.	" Loser.
" Prisching.	

" Vienna, 22 February, 1918."

Draft.

The centralization and co-ordination of all the German intelligence, news and propaganda services at home and abroad has long been a pressing need, which has repeatedly been brought to the notice of the Imperial Chancellor by His Excellency the First Quartermaster-General. The change has become inevitable now that England, America, France and Italy have created special Ministries of Propaganda.

The importance attached to propaganda in England is shown by the fact that there are now three Ministers of Propaganda there: Lord Northcliffe for enemy countries, Dr. Robert Donald for neutral countries and Mr. Rudyard Kipling for the home country.

In Berlin at the present moment there are in the various Government offices and war departments more than 22 Press authorities, which—without any common direction—are completely independent of each other, and in many cases unconsciously work against each other. The attempt to

remedy this unsatisfactory state of affairs by creating a Press Director, attached to the Imperial Chancellor, has failed. This post requires a man of authoritative position in public and political life, in constant and direct touch with the Imperial Chancellor, by whom he must be informed on all questions and from whom he must receive regular instructions. The chief duty of this new propaganda minister would be to co-ordinate and control the numerous existing Press organizations and to keep them supplied with prompt and well selected information.

It would also be his duty eventually to organize a comprehensive and uniform system of propaganda by speeches and interviews with statesmen. Such propaganda is an incontestable necessity, not only for maintaining *moral* at home, but also for weakening the enemy's home front. In England, for example, during the last week five propaganda speeches were made, the influence of which was considered of the first importance to the campaign against the *moral* of the Central Powers' home fronts.

Only a minister of propaganda, by reason of his intimate knowledge of the general political and military situation, would be qualified to decide when, where and through which department public announcements by statesmen should be made. With the authority of the Imperial Chancellor he would advise each head of a department as to what propaganda work came within his province.

To attain this object there would be no need at all for a complete change of organization. It is merely a question of co-ordinating all existing organizations under a strong, statesmanlike personality, capable of making his influence felt everywhere. In case it should not be considered desirable to appoint a new minister as minister of propaganda, it is suggested that the Secretary of State of the Colonial Office, His Excellency Dr. Solf, who at the present time has no office worthy of his energy, should be entrusted with this

special task. His speeches on behalf of colonial propaganda have aroused lively interest and approval at home; moreover, as a statesman Dr. Solf is regarded with great respect abroad; his utterances have always attracted special attention in the foreign and enemy Press.

The co-ordination of our whole propaganda and Press service is so pressing and incontestable a need that speedy action is most essential. It would, therefore, perhaps be advisable immediately to approach the Secretary of State for the Colonies tentatively on the subject of these duties. In the Press department of the Imperial Colonial Office His Excellency Dr. Solf would already possess an organization adequate to the pursuit of his task, especially if it were augmented by co-opting representatives of the various Press organizations. In this way the new Minister of Propaganda could begin effective work without delay, and without expense being incurred or time being lost in forming new organizations. The relation between the Press departments already existing and the different Government departments to which they are attached should in no way be disturbed by the creation of a central control. They remain part of the department concerned, the special duties of which they must carry out as before, but are under the general control of the Propaganda Minister, who is responsible to the Imperial Chancellor.

"The Imperial Chancellor.
"P. No. 136/18.
"In reply to letter of 20/3/18.
"M.J. No. 28826 P.

"Berlin,
"26/3/1918.

"To the Military Director of the Foreign Office.

"Your Excellency's proposal for the co-ordination of methods of propaganda under the direction of a highly placed personality, well known in the political world, is already en-

gaging my attention as far as the home country is concerned. The necessary organization is approaching completion. The War Ministry is co-operating with me and has undertaken the task of establishing co-ordination between the military and naval departments and the new central authority. I can therefore assume that Your Excellency has already received more detailed information from the War Minister.

"With regard to propaganda work abroad, which is an inseparable part of foreign politics, I am of the opinion that the Foreign Office should remain, as in the past, the sole responsible and directing authority. Its Intelligence section has been so greatly developed for this purpose during the past year that it is in a position satisfactorily to meet the demands made upon it. Everything will be done to improve the intelligence service and especially the branches now under the supervision of the German representatives abroad. The further development and success of this work will not be helped by the creation of a Ministry of Propaganda with controlling powers over the foreign service also.

(Signed) "HERTLING."

"The Imperial Chancellor.
"P. No. 628/18.

"G.H.Q.,
"29/8/1918.

"TO ALL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

"In order that the military operations should derive greater benefit from the publication of official news, I have decided on the following changes:

"1. The Secretary of State of the Foreign Office will be entrusted with the direction of a co-ordinated intelligence service, the functions of which, in co-operation with the existing Press and intelligence services at home and abroad, will be to publish speeches, articles, and anything else which may systematically guide public opinion. In this way the

effects of enemy propaganda can be counteracted and all available resources applied to a *moral* campaign in support of Germany and her allies.

"2. According to the instructions of the Secretary of State, the above-mentioned propaganda service will be directed:

"(*a*) On its political side by my Press Director, Director Deutelmoser;

"(*b*) On its military side by Colonel von Haeften, Department-Director on the General Staff of the Field Army.

"Colonel von Haeften is thus charged with the special task of securing G.H.Q. that supervision of the propaganda service which it requires. He is the essential connecting link between the Government and the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army.

"3. I have endowed my Press Director with full powers, within the sphere of his above-mentioned duties, to claim the support of the Press departments of all Government offices. He is further empowered to maintain direct touch with all the central authorities of the Empire and the German Federal States for the purpose of propaganda work.

"4. Similar powers are vested in Colonel von Haeften in his relation to the Press and intelligence services of the army and navy, and he will keep in touch with all the military authorities of the Empire.

"5. In order to secure perfect co-operation the Press Director and Colonel von Haeften will have a permanent working arrangement as to the measures to be adopted for the task they are undertaking and distribute the work accordingly in each individual case.

"6. Colonel von Haeften has a fundamental right to be present at the regular Press conferences held by me, my deputy or the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He is also to be invited to all meetings at which the representatives of the Press receive political information.

"7. The civil departments and intelligence services will be informed (so far as is necessary for their work or information), through the Press Director, of the general principles which the Foreign Secretary has laid down for the work of the Intelligence Service.

"Colonel von Haeften will do the same for the military authorities.

"8. While my Press Director is occupied with the above-mentioned special duties, the work of the Intelligence section of the Foreign Office will be supervised by his deputies.

(Signed) "VON HERTLING."

CHAPTER XI

THE EFFORTS OF THE HOUSE OF PARMA-BOURBON TO MAKE A SEPARATE PEACE

1. The negotiations from December 5, 1916, to March 24, 1917, and the Vienna Memoir of March 27, 1917.
2. Correspondence between the Emperor Karl and His Majesty the Emperor Wilhelm.
3. The negotiations in Paris and their failure owing to the attitude of Italy.
4. Continuation of the negotiations with the co-operation of the Chancellor, von Bethmann-Hollweg, and their failure.
5. The Emperor Karl's "Canossa" at Spa.

1.

With the accession to the throne of the Emperor Karl on November 21, 1916, begin the activities of the House of Parma-Bourbon aiming at the conclusion of a separate peace between Austria and the Entente.

The peace offer of December 12, 1916, had not been announced before the mother-in-law of the Emperor Karl on the 5th of the same month informed her sons, Sixtus and Xaver, lieutenants in the Belgian Army and French through and through at heart, of the Emperor's desire for peace. After the refusal of the peace offer of December 12 by the Entente and the opening of the unrestricted submarine campaign the question of a separate peace made more rapid headway. The Princes travelled to Switzerland and there met the

Emperor's envoy, Count Erdödy. On March 2, 1917, the Princes received in Switzerland a document drawn up by Count Czernin in French and a secret *note verbale*, emanating from the Emperor Karl, the tenor of which is not known.

On March 5 the Princes were received by President Poincaré, who declined the document, but indicated that the note might be a basis for further negotiations.

During the conversation Poincaré said to Prince Sixtus:

"It is in the interests of France not only to support Austria but to help in her aggrandizement (Silesia and Bavaria) at the expense of Germany. We will never make peace with Germany."

The Prince too thought that "Austria must be separated from Germany so that Germany might be beaten all the more decisively."

There was a second conference on March 8. On March 16 the Princes were in Switzerland. Prince Sixtus sent the Emperor a thoroughly characteristic letter. *Inter alia* he wrote:

"I consider it my duty to draw your attention particularly to the following point. No one is willing to negotiate with Germany until she is beaten. At the moment the opportunity is as favourable for you as it can ever be. Never again will you have such a chance of offering and concluding peace without suffering any loss on your side.

"If it falls to Germany to conclude peace with the Entente she will prefer—and I have already told you through Count Erdödy of what has come to our knowledge on this matter—to indemnify Russia, France and Italy at the expense of Turkey and Austria. . . . It is absolutely your interest to be first in the field and take steps for peace. Moreover, it is easier for you to make peace because men are well-disposed towards you, whereas the Entente is inspired by hostility towards the Hohenzollern princes. The whole world will soon be up in arms against Germany and it will be quite impossible to conclude an acceptable peace if you consider your destiny is tied to that of

Germany. Morally it should not be difficult for you to find a way to withdraw. For instance, you could bring forward one of those insoluble questions, such as Poland, between you and Prussia. . . . Germany is already going behind your back wherever she can."

As peace conditions he stipulates:

1. Austria recognizes the claim of France to Alsace-Lorraine as she originally possessed it.

2. Belgium must retain her sovereignty unimpaired under the present dynasty. She must retain all her African possessions.

3. Austria-Hungary declares that she is ready to restore the sovereignty of Serbia under its present dynasty. As a token of her goodwill and with a view to creating a natural outlet to the Adriatic Sea for Serbia, Austria-Hungary is prepared to hand over to Serbia the Albanian territory now in her possession. She is further prepared to secure friendly relations with Serbia by making her great economic concessions.

4. Austria-Hungary intends to begin preliminary conversations with Russia on the basis that she declares herself disinterested with regard to Constantinople and in return receives back the Austro-Hungarian territory now in Russian occupation.

The Princes thereupon went to Vienna, where they were received at Laxenburg in great secrecy. Count Czernin was present. On March 24 the Emperor gave the Prince the following letter:

"Laxenburg,
"March 24th, 1917.

"My dear Sixtus,

"The third year of a war which has brought so much sorrow and mourning to the world is drawing to a close. All the nations of my Empire are united more firmly than ever in the common resolution to see the integrity of the Monarchy

preserved, even at the cost of the heaviest sacrifices. Thanks to their unity, and the proud co-operation of all the nationalities of my Empire, the Monarchy has for nearly three years been in a position to withstand the heaviest onslaughts. (What about the deeds of his allies?—The Author.) No one can doubt the military successes of my troops, especially in the Balkan theatre. (Apparently the Emperor has forgotten the defeats of December, 1914, not to mention the vital assistance given by German troops in the autumn of 1915.—The Author.) France for her part has also displayed powers of resistance and a spirit which are worthy of all admiration. We all admire without stint the immense traditional bravery of the French army and the spirit of sacrifice of the whole French nation. It is therefore a special satisfaction to me, though we are enemies for the moment, to realize that no vital differences separate the views and aspirations of my Empire from those of France, and that I am entitled to cherish the hope that my sympathies for France, reinforced by those which hold sway in the whole Monarchy, will prevent the recurrence of a war for which I have no responsibility. (There is a lack of dignity about this.—The Author.) With that goal before my eyes and with the object of manifesting the reality of these sentiments, I beg you to inform the President of the French Republic, Monsieur Poincaré, discreetly and unofficially, that I will use all my resources and influence with my allies to support the just claims of the French in respect of Alsace-Lorraine. As regards Belgium, she must be integrally restored and retain the whole of her African possessions without prejudice to the compensation she is entitled to receive for the losses she has suffered.

"As regards Serbia, she too must be restored integrally, and we are ready to give proof of our desire for justice by granting her a suitable natural outlet to the Adriatic Sea as well as important concessions in the economic sphere.

"Austria on her side claims as a fundamental and indispensable right that in future the Kingdom of Serbia will

break off all present relations with, and indeed suppress, any association or body which is working for the destruction of the Monarchy, more particularly the Narodna Odbrana; that the Crown Prince of Serbia will faithfully crush all political agitation having that object, whether within or beyond the frontiers of Serbia, with all the resources at his command, and that in this matter Serbia will bind herself to submit to a guarantee of the Entente Powers.

"Events which have recently occurred in Russia compel me for the moment to reserve my views on affairs there until a legal government is eventually set up there.

"As I have thus frankly revealed my intentions, I must ask you to inform me for your part, after getting into touch with France and England, what the state of opinion is among those two Powers, primarily in order that the ground may be prepared for an agreement of the principles on which official negotiations may be inaugurated and brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

"Feeling confident that along these lines we shall be able to put a speedy end to the sufferings of so many millions of human beings and so many families which are living in care and anguish, I beg you to receive the assurance of my friendly and brotherly sympathy.

(Signed) "KARL."

Immediately after the departure of the Princes from Vienna on March 25, the Imperial Chancellor, von Bethmann, was in the city. Main Headquarters was not fully informed of the purpose of this visit and the negotiations there.

At the beginning of February, 1918, we got to know of the so-called Vienna Memoir which was agreed and drawn up at that time.

THE VIENNA MEMOIR OF MARCH 27, 1917

Résumé.

"At the conferences which have been held in recent weeks between the Cabinets of Vienna and Berlin, the question of the peace terms of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the German Empire were also discussed. In the first place agreement was come to on a minimum programme according to which both Powers assume that the evacuation of the territories occupied by their armies in Russia (including Poland), Montenegro, Serbia, Albania and Rumania, will essentially be made dependent upon the restoration of the territorial *status quo ante bellum* of both Powers in East and West.

"At these conferences, however, the case was considered that the war might have a more favourable conclusion for our group, and that the Central Powers might consider the permanent incorporation of enemy territory in addition to their territorial integrity. In view of that eventuality, agreement was reached on the principle that the accessions of territory of the two Powers must be proportionate to their respective achievements. In this connection Germany was thinking principally of the East, and Austria-Hungary mainly of Rumania.

(Signed) "CZERNIN.
(Signed) "BETHMANN-HOLLWEG.

"March 27, 1917."

I have never been able to ascertain exactly how this document came into existence. It is significant that at the very moment when Austria is promising Alsace-Lorraine to France, she is here guaranteeing the territorial integrity of the German Empire, and that both statesmen are not averse to the idea of incorporating enemy territory—that is "annexation"—if the

war ends favourably. For the rest the agreement is on lines on which Main Headquarters always insisted.

2.

On April 3 the Emperor Karl and Count Czernin were on a visit to the Kaiser in Homburg. Count Czernin here put forward the suggestion that Alsace-Lorraine should be ceded to France, coupled, it is true, with a somewhat ambiguous renunciation of Poland, with which Galicia was to be incorporated.

As these ideas met with opposition, the Emperor Karl and Count Czernin proceeded to bring greater pressure to bear on Germany—this being explicable solely by reference to the step for a separate peace. The result was the following exchange of letters between the Emperor Karl and Kaiser Wilhelm.

Letter from the Emperor Karl to Kaiser Wilhelm.

"14/4/1917.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"My Foreign Minister has given me the accompanying *exposé*, with which I identify myself entirely and which accurately sets out the position as it appears to my eyes. I hasten to send you the memorandum, dear friend, and beg you sincerely to keep the following aspect in mind. We are fighting against a new enemy which is more dangerous than the Entente—the international revolution, which is finding its most powerful ally in the universal semi-starvation. I implore you not to disregard this fateful side of the question and to remember that a speedy end of the war—even at the cost of heavy sacrifices—will give us a chance of dealing successfully with the revolutionary agitation which is afoot.

"In true friendship, I am

"Always your

"KARL."

"GRACIOUS SIRE,

"Will Your Majesty permit me to state my considered views on the present situation with that frankness which I believe has been allowed me from the very start. It is perfectly clear that our military resources are coming to an end. It would be a waste of Your Majesty's time to go into great detail on this matter. I will only refer to the failing supplies of raw material for munitions production, our completely exhausted man-power, and more than anything else the dumb despair which is settling on all our nationalities as the result of malnutrition, and which makes the continuation of our sufferings impossible. Even if I am able to hope that we shall succeed in surviving the next few months and maintaining a successful defensive, it is perfectly clear to me that another winter campaign is absolutely out of the question. In other words, peace must be made at any price in the late summer or autumn.

"There is no doubt at the moment that the most important thing is to begin negotiations for peace at a time when our enemies are not yet fully conscious of the exhaustion of our resources. If we treat with the Entente at the moment when the progress of events within the frontiers of the Empire reveals the imminence of a collapse, the step will be futile and the Entente will accept no conditions except those which spell the utter destruction of the Central Powers. To begin *in time* is thus of cardinal importance. Here I cannot leave on one side, however painful it may be, the theme on which the whole structure of my argument is based. It is the danger of revolution which is appearing on the horizon of all Europe, and which is supported by England and represents her latest method of warfare. Five monarchs have been dethroned in this war, and the ridiculous ease with which the strongest monarchy in the world has been overthrown may prove some inducement to reflect and remember the words, *Exempla trahunt.* It is no good to answer me that Germany and Austria-Hungary are in a different position or to object that the monarchical idea is firmly

rooted in Berlin and Vienna and excludes such a possibility. This war has ushered in a new era of world history: it has no precedent and no prologue. The world is no longer what it was three years ago, and it is useless to search history for analogies for the events which are of everyday occurrence in these times. Any statesman who is not blind or deaf must see that the dumb desperation of the public is increasing daily. He is bound to hear the sullen murmurs which can be heard among the broad masses, and must reckon with that factor if he still retains a sense of responsibility. Your Majesty is familiar with the secret reports of the State authorities. Two things are clear. The Russian Revolution is having a greater effect on our Slavs than our Germans, and the responsibility for continuing the war is far greater for a monarch whose country is held together solely by the bond of the dynasty than for him whose people are themselves fighting for their national independence. Your Majesty knows that the burden on your people has now become such as to be simply intolerable. Your Majesty knows that the bow is so taut that it may be expected to snap any day. If serious disorders occur among us, or in Germany, it will be impossible to conceal such a change from foreign countries, and from that moment all further efforts to conclude peace will be futile. I do not think that the internal situation of Germany is materially different from ours, but I am afraid that military circles in Germany are to a certain extent cradling themselves in illusions. I am firmly convinced that Germany too, exactly like ourselves, has reached the end of her resources, and that the responsible political authorities in Berlin realize it also.

"I am absolutely certain that if Germany should attempt to carry on another winter campaign, revolutionary movements would occur within the Empire which I, as the responsible defender of the dynastic principle, should regard as infinitely more dangerous than a bad peace concluded by the sovereigns. If the monarchs of the Central Powers are not in a position to

make peace in the next few months, their peoples will make it over their heads, and then the waves of revolution will sweep away everything for which our sons and brothers are still fighting and dying to-day.

"I have certainly no intention of making an *oratio pro domo*, but I beg your gracious Majesty to remember that two years ago, when I was the only man to foresee the war with Rumania, I preached to deaf ears and when I prophesied practically the day of the outbreak of war two months before it came, I found no one to believe me. I am as convinced of the justice of my diagnosis now as I was then, and I cannot repeat with enough insistence that we shall not easily counter the dangers which I see growing day by day.

"The declaration of war by America has certainly made the situation materially worse. It may be that months will pass before America can bring considerable forces into the theatres of war, but the moral impetus, the fact that the Entente is hoping for fresh and powerful aid, transforms the situation to our disadvantage because our enemies have obviously more time than we have and can wait longer, unfortunately, than we can. It cannot yet be said what turn events will take in Russia. I hope—and this is indeed the crux of my whole argument—that Russia has lost her offensive capacity for a long time, perhaps for ever, and that that important factor can be exploited. Though I expect that an Anglo-French, and probably an Italian offensive also, are imminent, I believe and hope that we shall succeed in beating off both attacks. If we are successful—and I calculate that this may be in two or three months—before America can change the military situation to our disadvantage, we must bring forward comprehensive and detailed peace proposals and not be afraid of making great and indeed painful sacrifices.

"In Germany great hopes are placed in the U-boat campaign. I regard those hopes as illusory. I have never doubted the extraordinary achievements of the German sea heroes, and I

admit with amazement and admiration that the monthly figures of tonnage sunk are incredible, but I note that the success expected and presumed by the Germans has not materialized.

"Your Majesty will remember that when Admiral von Holtzendorff was last in Vienna he positively promised us that within six months the intensified submarine operations would paralyse England. Your Majesty will also remember that we contested all those assumptions and declared that though we did not doubt that the U-boat campaign would injure England, the hoped-for success might be neutralized by the prospective entry of America into the war. Two and a half months (that is practically half the period assigned) have elapsed since the U-boat campaign began, and all the reports which we get from England agree that it is hopeless even to think of the collapse of this, our mightiest and most dangerous foe. If, in spite of your serious doubts, Your Majesty yielded to the wishes of Germany and allowed the Austro-Hungarian navy to co-operate in the submarine campaign, this was not because we were converted by the German arguments, but because Your Majesty considered it absolutely necessary that we should work with Germany in loyal comradeship in every sphere, and because we were convinced, unfortunately, that Germany was no longer to be turned from her resolution to begin the intensified submarine campaign.

"To-day, however, even in Germany the enthusiastic advocates of the submarine war are beginning to realize that this weapon will not decide the war, and I hope that the (unfortunately) fallacious idea that England will be compelled to make peace within a few months will lose ground in Berlin also. In politics nothing is more dangerous than to believe what one wants to believe; nothing is more fatal than the principle of refusing to face facts and yielding to utopian illusions from which there must be a terrible awakening sooner or later.

"England, the driving force of the war, will not be compelled

to lay down her arms, even in many months, but it is possible —and here I admit a limited success for the U-boat campaign —that after a few months England will begin to calculate whether it is wise or reasonable to continue this war *à outrance*, and whether it would not be better policy to cross the golden bridge which has been built for her by the Central Powers. Then would be the moment for great and painful sacrifices on our part.

"Under my responsible guidance Your Majesty has scorned the repeated attempts of our enemies to separate us from our Allies because Your Majesty is incapable of dishonourable conduct. But Your Majesty has also commissioned me to tell the statesmen of the allied German Empire that we are at the end of our resources and that Germany cannot rely on us any longer after the late summer.* I have carried out that command, and the German statesmen have left me in no doubt that even for Germany another winter campaign was impossible. What I have to say can practically be compressed into a single sentence: we can still wait a few weeks and see whether there is any chance of conversations with Paris or Petersburg. If this fails, we must play our last card—in good time—and make those 'maximum' proposals to which I have previously referred.

"Your Majesty has proved that you are not inspired by egotism and do not demand greater sacrifices of our German ally than you are prepared to make yourself. No one can ask more.

"But Your Majesty is responsible to God and your peoples to do everything to avert the catastrophe of a collapse of the Monarchy. Your Majesty has a sacred duty towards God and your peoples to defend the dynastic principle and your throne with all your might and as long as you draw breath.

(Signed) "CZERNIN.

"Vienna,
"April 12, 1917."

* This subject was not referred to subsequently. [The Author.]

Reply of Kaiser Wilhelm.

"Berlin,
"May, 1917.

"My dear Friend,

"The *exposé* of Count Czernin you were good enough to send me compelled me to ask my Imperial Chancellor for an expression of opinion on the various topics raised therein. I am taking the liberty of appending the report of Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg.

"I am convinced that the report puts the situation in the right light. Our successes on the western front and at sea strengthen my confidence in a victorious end.

"I do not ignore the growing difficulties associated with the length of the war, nor do I close my eyes to the possible effects of the Russian revolution. I believe, however, that even from this point of view the circumstances of the Central Powers, fallen upon by their enemies at their selected moment and yet victorious on the battlefields, are quite otherwise than in Russia, the fallen government of which let loose the war in August, 1914, and suffered heavy and disastrous defeats at the hands of our armies.

"Moreover, a peace which imposed heavy sacrifices upon our countries—on account of the depression it would cause in our whole economic and commercial life, combined with the general food shortage which would not be relieved the moment peace was concluded—could harbour great dangers for our monarchies.

"I cherish the hope that you will give due weight to the views I hold both with regard to peace and war.

"In true friendship, I am always
"Your
"Wilhelm."

"Berlin,

"May 4, 1917.

"In accordance with Your Majesty's command I beg to make the following comments on the *exposé* of the 12th ult. of the Imperial and Royal Minister for Foreign Affairs, which I herewith return.

"Since the *exposé* was written, in the west the French and English have opened on a broad front the great break-through offensive which had been announced, ruthlessly throwing in great masses of men and an enormous mass of war material. The German army has beaten off the mighty onslaught of enemies far superior in number. All future attacks will, we are strongly justified in hoping, collapse against the heroism of the men and their leaders' wills of steel.

"Judging by previous experience in the war, we may regard the situation of the allied army on the Isonzo with the same confidence.

"Our eastern front has been materially relieved by the political upheavals in Russia. We need no longer expect any Russian offensive on a considerable scale. An increasing relief of the situation there would release further troops, even if it proved necessary to erect a firm barrier on the Russian frontier against any local invasion of the revolutionary movement. With this additional reinforcement the relative strengths on the western front will be transformed in our favour. Further, the relief in the east will mean more men for the Austro-Hungarian monarchy wherewith victoriously to sustain the campaign on the Italian front to the end of the war.

"There is enough raw material for munitions production in both the allied monarchies.

"The achievements of our navy are to be added to the triumphs of the army. When Admiral von Holtzendorff laid the prospects of the U-boat campaign before His Apostolic Majesty, the chances of success of this decisive measure had previously been subjected to detailed examination here, and

the military advantages to be anticipated had been carefully weighed against the political risk. We had not closed our eyes to the prospect that the institution of a blockade area round England and France would mean the entry of the United States of America into the war, and as a later consequence the breaking-off of diplomatic relations by other neutral States. We were fully conscious that our enemies would thereby gain a moral and economic reinforcement, but we were and are convinced that this disadvantage will be far outweighed by the advantages of the U-boat war. In course of time the centre of gravity of the world struggle which was in the east at the outset has been progressively transferred to the west, where English obstinacy and perseverance continue to animate and steel the resistance of our enemies through changing fortunes. A comparatively favourable final conclusion is only possible for us by a determined attack on the core of the enemy's resistance—England.

"The successes and effects hitherto achieved by the submarine operations greatly exceed our calculations and anticipations at the time. The most recent statements of leading men in England and the growing restriction of imports, as well as the corresponding discussions in the press, certainly constitute an urgent appeal to the nation to put forth a supreme effort, but also reveal a picture of serious anxiety and bear witness to the straits to which England has been reduced.

"At the sitting of the Main Committee of the Reichstag on the 28th of last month Secretary of State Helfferich gave a comprehensive description of the effects of the submarine campaign on England. The report was published in the 'Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung' of the 1st of the month.

"According to the latest news, the Food Controller, Lord Devonport, has found himself compelled, in view of the inadequate imports of wheat, to suggest a fresh distribution of the freight space. That space is, however, already so restricted that it is impossible to get more for corn except by deciding

seriously to restrict military operations in other places. Apart from the tasks of the overseas expeditions, ships could only be released by cutting off those imports which require much space. Meanwhile England needs a vast amount of transport not only for food but also for importing iron ore to keep her war industries going, and timber to maintain her coal production at the necessary level. Neither the supply of ore nor the native production of timber in England make possible any reduction in these departments in the allotment of tonnage. Even now, after three months of the U-boat war, it is incontestable that the gaps which these operations are making in the tonnage available are lowering the living conditions of the population to an intolerable degree, and will so paralyse the war industries that any hope must be abandoned of defeating Germany by an immense superiority in ammunition and guns.

"Further, the shortage of tonnage may prevent the eventual increased production of America in the sphere of war industries from compensating for the falling-off in the level of production in England. The rate at which the submarine campaign is destroying tonnage makes it impossible for new construction to produce the necessary tonnage. *In one month* our submarines destroyed more than the English shipbuilding yards produced in the whole of last year. Even the widely and loudly trumpeted American wooden ships would not make good the losses of four months even if they were already in existence. But they will come too late. Experts in England have already stated publicly that there are only two ways in which the destructive effects of the submarine campaign can be averted: either to construct ships faster than the Germans can destroy them, or to destroy submarines faster than the Germans can build them. The first course has already proved itself impossible. Yet the submarine losses still remain far behind the rate of new construction.

"England must therefore expect a progressively increasing loss of tonnage.

"The effects of the U-boat campaign will also make themselves felt in growing measure on the national food supply and thus on the energies of the individual and the State.

"For these reasons I look forward with full confidence to the final result of the U-boat campaign.

"To judge by secret, but reliable, reports the Minister-President Ribot recently told the Italian ambassador in Paris that France was approaching exhaustion.* These words were uttered before the latest Anglo-French offensive began. Since that time France has suffered bloody losses which will reach enormous figures if the fighting is maintained at its present intensity until the offensive is broken off.

"The French nation has certainly performed extraordinary feats in this war, but the State will not be able to bear the colossal burden indefinitely. A reaction on the *moral* of France, which is sustained artificially by all kinds of irritating expedients, seems inevitable.

"As regards our situation at home, I do not ignore the difficulties which are the inevitable consequences of the desperate struggle and our isolation from the world seas. I am absolutely confident, however, that we shall succeed in overcoming the difficulties without permanently endangering our national strength and the common welfare, and without any considerable crisis or risk to the structure of the State.

"Whether we have the right to regard the general situation as favourable or not, I find myself in complete agreement with Count Czernin as to our goal of securing an honourable peace which assures our and our allies' interests as soon as possible. Further, I share the view of the Minister that the vital moment of Russia's weakness must be exploited and that a fresh peace step must be taken at a time when the military and political initiative is still in our hands. Count Czernin considers that that time will be two or three months hence,

*See p. 350. [The Author.]

when the hostile offensive will have come to an end. As a matter of fact, in view of the great expectations cherished by the French and English of a decisive success for their offensive, and the hopes of the Entente for a revival of Russian activity —hopes which have not yet vanished—too strong an expression of readiness for peace on our part would not only be condemned to failure, but would revive the forces of our enemies by the consoling spectacle of the hopeless exhaustion of the Central Powers. At the moment a general peace could be secured only by submission to the wills of our enemies. But such a peace would not be suffered by the nation and would conjure up fateful dangers for the Monarchy. Composure, unity and confidence—before the external world also—seem to me therefore more necessary than ever. Affairs in Russia have hitherto developed in our favour. Party strife has left the sphere of political, economic and social demands and in increasing measure invaded the restricted field of war and peace questions, and it seems more and more clear that only those parties will maintain themselves permanently in power which take the path to peace with the Central Powers. It is our serious task to follow and assist the process of development and disintegration in Russia with the greatest attention, and deal with the coming Russian soundings in such a way that they lead to actual peace negotiations, though without *empressement* to the point of anxiety. It is probable that Russia will avoid the appearance of a betrayal of her allies and will try to find some method which will in fact bring peace between Russia and the Central Powers, although superficially it will represent an attempt at a compromise between two parties as a prelude to a general peace.

"As in July, 1914, we stood by the side of Austria-Hungary as an absolutely loyal ally, so at the end of the world war the basis of a peace will be found which brings to both the associated monarchies the guarantee of a prosperous future.

(Signed) "VON BETHMANN-HOLLWEG."

3.

Meanwhile, on March 31, Prince Sixtus had been received in Paris, immediately after his return, by President Poincaré, this time in the presence of the Minister-President Ribot.

Poincaré "ran through the letter of March 24th of the Emperor Karl with bated breath." The situation of the Entente was serious at that moment. On the basis of the letter the negotiations were eagerly continued until April 18, and Lloyd George was brought in. From these conferences it appeared:

1. That France was considering a separate peace with Austria only with a view to inflicting a more decisive defeat on Germany.

2. That Germany would only get a peace equivalent to her destruction.

3. That France claimed Alsace-Lorraine with the frontiers of 1914 and was trying to get the left bank of the Rhine.

4. That Belgium was to be aggrandized by the acquisition of Malmédy.

At the conference at St. Jean de Maurienne on April 19 between Ribot, Lloyd George and Sonnino, it appeared that Italy adhered to the claims she was entitled to make against Austria by virtue of the compact of April 26, 1917.

As the Emperor Karl had shown no spirit of conciliation towards Italy in his letter, the Entente recommended that Austria should make concessions. Prince Sixtus agreed to continue his efforts to secure a separate peace with Austria.

On April 22 Jules Cambon gave the Prince the following note:

"No peace proposals on the part of Austria can be considered which do not take account of the point of view of the Italian Government. The proposals which have been communicated to us contain no reference to the Italian claims.

On the other hand, the conference at St. Jean de Maurienne revealed that the Italian Government is averse to abating any of the claims which were formulated on its entry into the war. In these circumstances it would be futile to begin conversations which could only end in a blind alley. If, within a definite time, the Austro-Hungarian Government should revise its intentions and consider itself able to renew the negotiations for a separate peace, it would be necessary for it to bear in mind the aspirations of Italy, both with regard to Trieste and the Trentino.*

"The feelings of sympathy which His Majesty has expressed for France and her army are reciprocated."

Monsieur Cambon then put forward the view that in spite of the help of America the war would not end before the next spring. His only anxiety was that the public at home, who were becoming more and more exhausted by the war, might demand its conclusion at any price.

The Prince gave it as his opinion of the situation that the only anxious feature was the loss of men, and that all the determination of the English and the Americans to continue the war *ad infinitum* could not prevent France from finding herself some day without men.

4.

On April 25 Prince Sixtus had a further meeting with Count Erdödy in Switzerland, informed him of the turn affairs had taken and asked him to press the Emperor to make concessions to Italy and conclude peace. Count Erdödy communicated the Prince's views to the Emperor. On his return to Switzerland he told the Prince that the Kaiser was prepared to conclude a separate peace with the Entente. As the efforts at

* France therefore considered concessions on the part of Italy with regard to Dalmatia possible. It is significant that the Entente say nothing about Rumania. Count Czernin made use of this later. [The Author.]

Homburg on April 3 had had no success, he (the Emperor) had henceforth to sever the destinies of Austria-Hungary and Germany. With regard to Italy Vienna was quite composed; an envoy from that country had offered peace to the Monarchy three weeks previously and demanded only the Italian portion of the Trentino. Of course this had emanated not from Sonnino, but from Headquarters. Count Erdödy gave the Prince a declaration in the following terms:

"The Emperor is prepared to continue the negotiations with a view to concluding a peace. He is prepared to make a separate peace with the Entente but does not wish to be forced into an actual betrayal of Germany.

"Two or three weeks previously Italy proposed peace to the Emperor. Now, through the mediation of England, she is trying to get more. That cannot be."

Prince Sixtus adopted the standpoint that the Emperor should accept Italy's offer at once.

On May 8 and 9 the Prince was again in Vienna. The Emperor received him, again in the presence of Count Czernin. He refused to negotiate directly with Italy. France and England should mediate and secure him some compensation for the Italian Trentino. (It appears that Austria was thinking of Rumania.)

The following documents show how the conferences came to nought.

a. The Emperor's letter to his Brother-in-law.

"Laxenburg,
"May 9, 1917.

"My dear Sixtus,

"It is a great satisfaction to me to see that France and England agree with me in my view of what is the soundest basis for a European peace. They do not share my view, however, in their intention not to make peace without the 'participation' of Italy—Italy which has just offered to make peace with the Monarchy after abating her unjustifiable claims

for annexation of the Slav countries on the Adriatic Sea. Italy limits her claims to that part of the Tyrol in which Italian is spoken. I have postponed the examination of these demands until I have heard the reply of England and France to my peace proposals. Count Erdödy will give you the views of myself and my ministers on these different points.

"The good understanding between the Monarchy, France and England on so great a number of material points will, we are convinced, prove a guarantee that the last difficulties which stand in the way of an honourable peace will be overcome.

"I am grateful for the help you are giving me in the work of peace I have undertaken in the joint interests of our countries. As you told me when you were leaving, this war has laid on you the duty of remaining true to your name and the great history of your House, and at first you worked for the wounded heroes on the battlefield and subsequently fought for France. I have understood your point of view and, though events for which I have not the slightest responsibility have separated us, my affection for you has remained unchanged.

"I should like to reserve for myself the right, in case it corresponds with your wishes, of communicating my direct and personal views to France and England through no other channel than yourself.

"Rest assured of my deep, brotherly affection,

"KARL."

b. Count Czernin's Note.

1. The idea that Austria-Hungary *alone* should surrender territory [to Italy.—The Author] is impossible. The idea might form a basis for discussion if compensation were given in some other quarter, so long as it is remembered that the ground which has been heroically defended, and is soaked with the blood of our soldiers, is of incomparably greater value to us than any new territory.

2. What guarantees are offered us that the integrity of the Monarchy (apart from the eventual rectifications of frontier here decided upon) will be preserved ?

3. A definite reply cannot be given until an answer has been received on the two points above, as it is only then that Austria-Hungary can approach her allies.

4. In any case Austria is prepared to continue the conversations and now, as ever, is anxious to work for an honourable peace in order that a *general* peace may follow.

The Prince regarded peace as a certainty. The diplomats were to be appointed who were to draw up the detailed agreement in Switzerland.

As after the first visit of Prince Sixtus to Vienna at the end of March, the Imperial Chancellor, von Bethmann, went to Vienna once more on May 13. This must have given the Entente the impression that Austria was being egged on by Germany. It must have strengthened the determination of the Entente.

The Imperial Chancellor, von Bethmann, was told about the negotiations, but *how* much I should not like to say.

Count Wedel, the late German ambassador in Vienna, gives the following description of the affair in the "Hamburger Nachrichten," though his account of the events is very different from that of Prince Sixtus:

In May the brothers Sixtus and Xaver of Parma suddenly appeared in Vienna. Only the Court seems to have had previous knowledge of and arranged their visit. They were met by an officer on the Swiss frontier and taken to the capital by motor-car. They remained there several days as incognito as possible, but their presence was remarked and widely discussed. Prince Sixtus said that he had been empowered by President Poincaré to say that the Entente was prepared to discuss an understanding with Vienna. In answer to Count Czernin's question whether a *general* peace was under consideration in which Germany could be included, Prince Sixtus was unable to reply with a clear "yes," but he declared that he had no reason to answer in the negative. In Paris there was no objection whatever to Vienna discussing the matter with Berlin. Thereupon Czernin immediately informed the Chancellor. Herr von Bethmann immediately came himself to Vienna on May 13. It was his last visit to the Austrian capital. Herr von Bethmann absolutely agreed with Czernin's view

that nothing must be left undone to bring the bloody struggle to an end, and that a conciliatory answer should be returned. As Prince Sixtus had brought no conditions with him, both statesmen were of opinion that conditions had better not be discussed, and that they should answer that the Central Powers would only be too glad to open conversations at any time, and the Entente could choose the method which they regarded as likely to knot still more closely the threads brought together by Prince Sixtus. Eventually the idea was mooted of a meeting of the envoys of the warring Powers in Switzerland with a view to finding a basis for further negotiations, and the proposal was again brought up in the conversation between Prince Sixtus and Count Czernin. With this answer Prince Sixtus returned to Paris satisfied. Even Herr von Bethmann and Count Czernin were hopeful. But disappointment was in store. The Entente did not spin the threads any further. We must assume that what was intended was a separate peace with Austria, and not a general peace. There is proof in the fact that Count Czernin, who put out further feelers, was subsequently informed that the Entente was prepared only for a separate peace with Austria, if Austria would submit to the London agreement. That meant neither more nor less than sheer capitulation. By the Treaty of London of April 26, 1916, Austria lost the Tyrol up to the Brenner and the whole Adriatic territory. She would be cut off from the sea and cease to be an independent great Power. This was the honourable peace of understanding which the Entente was prepared to make with Vienna. As far as can be seen Prince Sixtus of Parma fulfilled his mission correctly and in the sense of his instructions. He strove honourably to effect an understanding. It was not his fault that his name was coupled with unpleasant associations a year later.

It must be left to future historians to explain the discrepancies between the account of Prince Sixtus and that of Count Wedel.

Count Czernin returned the visit of the Imperial Chancellor as early as May 17/18 at General Headquarters in Kreuznach. Here, without Main Headquarters receiving any information about Austria's peace step, even at this stage, the following agreement was made between the Chancellor and Count Czernin in the presence of the General Staff.

c. The Kreuznach Agreement of May 17/18, 1917.

1. Austria-Hungary for herself will demand the complete integrity of the Monarchy, with Lovcen in addition, military rectifications of frontier in Serbia (particularly the Macva), the establishment of a small New Serbia without harbours, the restoration of Montenegro and Northern Albania, if possible with Prishtina and Prizrend, all three states to be militarily,

politically and economically dependent on Austria-Hungary. The eventual establishment of a New Serbia, dependent upon Austria-Hungary, with an outlet to the Adriatic, will be regarded as a great sacrifice on the part of Austria-Hungary. Austria-Hungary will be friendly to Bulgaria's ambitions in Serbia, especially her desire for the lower Morava.

From the German point of view, it is pointed out that the following German proposals mean material support for the Balkan policy of Austria-Hungary, and further that even Austria-Hungary's minimum programme will bring her very considerable political and economic advantages.

From the same point of view, importance is attached to the fact that a situation will be created in the Balkans which seems likely to be permanent; the small states will disappear and Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria will be satisfied.

Germany advocates a large New Serbia (Western Serbia, Montenegro) and a Northern Albania, both closely bound to Austria-Hungary and dependent upon her in a military, political and economic sense. The form of the association is Austria-Hungary's affair.

Germany recommends that Austria-Hungary should be conciliatory towards the Bulgarian desire for the left bank of the Morava (railway) and eventually Prishtina also.

Italy must be ousted from Valona.

The incorporation of Southern Albania in Greece is desirable.

Germany wishes Austria-Hungary to leave her a free hand in the agreement to be made with Bulgaria with regard to the exploitation of the mineral resources of New Bulgaria. Germany regards this as an essential part of the mutual agreement for the general terms of peace.

Efforts should be made to get Salonica declared a free port.

2. If Germany carries through the territorial incorporation of Courland and Lithuania, as well as the solution of the Polish question which is contemplated on the

German side, it is agreed that the occupied portion of Rumania, with the exception of the Bulgarian Dobrudja (frontier as before 1913) and a strip along the frontier south of the Cernavoda–Constanza railway, shall form a separate state in Austria-Hungary's sphere of interest, Germany's economic participation in Rumania being guaranteed. Predominant share in the possession and exploitation of the mineral resources (mineral oils), Danube traffic railway. Separate conferences shall be held on this matter at which guarantees will be given that no customs or tariff measures will prejudice the economic participation which Germany claims. There would be a basis for such guarantees if the negotiations for a common Germano-Austro-Hungarian economic state were brought to a final issue.

On the part of Germany emphasis is laid on the great accession of power which Austria-Hungary receives from Rumania, especially the advantages which accrue to her through acquiring an outlet to the Black Sea.

At Austria-Hungary's wish Germany declares herself ready to instruct the military administration in Rumania to prepare public opinion for the political, military and economic association of Rumania with the Central Powers by announcing it to the nation.

3. On the assumptions set out in Paragraph 2 hereof Austria-Hungary renounces any condominium in Poland and will be disinterested in a political and military sense (including the railway question) in the Kingdom of Poland.

Germany is conscious of the heavy task she is taking over in Poland.

4. Austria-Hungary and Germany agree to enter into negotiations on these principles with a view to a settlement of affairs in the East and the Balkans.

Kreuznach,

May 18, 1917.

After the return of Prince Sixtus to Paris on May 20 he had several conferences with Poincaré and Ribot. The *moral* of France was on the down grade.* In the telegram of May 29 given there we find: "The Socialists are trying to unite with a view to compelling steps towards an early peace. Unrest is increasing. . . ." According to a remark of Clemenceau, the French Government had made up their minds, though without breathing a word about it, to be content with a plebiscite in Alsace-Lorraine. Poincaré said that in his opinion the allies had entered the war with promises which he personally regarded as too large, and that the position demanded a reduction of their claims. Ribot, thinking of Italy, and now of Rumania also, disagreed.

On the 23rd Prince Sixtus was in London. He saw Lloyd George and the King of England. The question of compensation to Austria for her loss of territory to Italy was there discussed. The Prince refused the offer of German territory and colonies as such compensation.

Lloyd George suggested a conference between the Kings of England and Italy and Poincaré, accompanied by their Prime Ministers. They were not clear about the peace step which Austria maintained Italy had taken. Lloyd George also considered the idea of a meeting between Ribot, Czernin and himself.

He continued to labour the idea of a conference of the sovereigns. According to the report of Prince Sixtus, Sonnino made difficulties. In any case the conference never materialized.

Ambassador Count Wedel attributes this to the fact that the interim report of Count Czernin became known to the Entente. He writes as follows in the "Hamburger Nachrichten":

"For Berlin and Vienna it was a very unpleasant surprise when a Rhenish paper discussed the secret report of

* See p. 350.

Count Czernin. It was stated that Herr Erzberger* had communicated it confidentially at a meeting—in Frankfort-a.-M. if I am not mistaken. When a secret is communicated to a considerable body it generally succeeds in getting beyond that body. In this particular case the secret did not even stop at the German frontier, but found its way to Paris. The secret interim report of Czernin was discussed with peculiar satisfaction by a French newspaper—I think it was the 'Temps.' When one realizes the contents of the report it is easy to imagine the impression it made on the Entente. A French diplomatist has betrayed in Vienna the fact that in 1917 there was a moment† when Lloyd George, who really decided questions of war and peace, wavered in his confidence in victory as the result of the effects of the U-boat campaign, and was not wholly hostile to the idea of an understanding. Lloyd George and Ribot really intended to go to Rome to discuss the project of a peace of understanding with their Italian colleagues. The projected journey was given up because in the meanwhile the situation had been changed by the arrival of news from Austria. The diplomatist also revealed the fact that Czernin's interim report was known in Paris and had caused lively satisfaction in official circles. They believed that Austria, and perhaps Germany too, was approaching internal collapse, that they had victory in their pockets and therefore they definitely abandoned all idea of a peace of understanding. At the same time the project of a separate peace with Vienna, on which hopes had been placed from time to time, lost interest. The collapse of the Central Powers was expected every month, almost every week, and thus they could not explain the mighty offensives of those Powers in the autumn of 1917 and spring of 1918. They found themselves disillusionized, and that is comprehensible enough, for the Entente could not disregard the exaggerations of Czernin's

* Who was in Vienna on April 22 and 23. [The Author.]

† In another place Count Wedel says that this was the only occasion on which England and France seriously thought of making peace. [The Author.]

report and their purpose. Even Herr Erzberger could not do that, and indeed omitted to ascertain what relation they bore to the report and how far it was based on facts. Influenced by the pessimistic descriptions, he appears to have believed that the three to four months which the Emperor Karl had given were the limit and that the war must be stopped. He discouraged the Germans and encouraged the enemy, very much against his will. But, worse than that, he destroyed the last chance of an understanding by his unfortunate communication of the report to that assembly. After the English had introduced the convoy system the U-boat operations ceased to have their full effect, the danger to England was over, Lloyd George's belief in victory was fully restored, and the determination to continue the war to final victory was as firm as ever."

Vienna, July 27, 1919.—The following telegram was sent by Count Czernin to the *Korrespondenz Wilhelm.*

Grundlsee,
July 27, 1919, 4.10 p.m.

In reply to many queries in the Press, please publish following lines: As far as I can judge by extracts from the Press the speech of Erzberger does not give an exhaustive account of events. Many extremely important matters are not referred to, and the result is a false picture. As regards my report of April, 1917, with which Erzberger deals, a report in which I advised the Central Powers to end the war by making territorial sacrifices, this was addressed exclusively to the two Emperors and the Imperial Chancellor. There was then a well-founded hope of arriving at a peace of understanding, even if associated with sacrifices. Some irresponsible person gave this report, behind my back and without my knowledge, to Herr Erzberger, who did not keep it secret. I must, however, state expressly that Erzberger acted in a *bonâ fide* manner and was convinced, and with justice, that he was fulfilling the sense of his instructions when he gave away what was a strict secret. As a result of Erzberger's action the contents of the report came to the knowledge of our enemies. Any one who reads my report can imagine the result. Count Wedel's account is therefore perfectly accurate so far as I am aware. For the rest I can prove my statements by documents which are in my possession. I only heard of Erzberger's communication of my report when it was too late. The facts now in dispute between Erzberger and Count Wedel are, however, only part of a whole chain of irresponsible intrigues, the progress of which I only discovered a year later, and which caused my resignation. My book on the world war, which is about to appear, will throw as much light as I think necessary on these events. It will be based on documents and give the whole truth.

Ambassador Count Wedel sent the following note to the editor in chief of the "Hamburger Nachrichten":

Herr Erzberger has denied at Weimar that Count Czernin compelled him to come to Vienna and justify the communication of his report. These are Count Czernin's words in his letter, which I have in my possession:

"Erzberger has got to know about my report and committed the most serious indiscretions. He came to Vienna at my summons in order to justify what he had done. He was utterly overcome and realized his colossal mistake."

With regard to these events there are not only the letters of Hohenlohe, but other documents which supply proof. Herr Erzberger must be sorry that it is so. Secretary of State von Kühlmann also knows the truth.

The Emperor Karl's letter of May 9 and Count Czernin's note were, in fact, never answered. With a view to sparing the Emperor Karl's feelings, Count Armand was sent to Switzerland in August by the Entente. There he met the Austrian diplomat, Herr Rivertera. Nothing is known about the conference.

Meanwhile the Imperial Chancellor, von Bethmann, had been replaced at Berlin by Dr. Michaelis, and at the instigation of, certainly in co-operation with, Count Czernin, the Peace Resolution was drawn up. A peace step on the part of the Pope, whose intermediary was the recently appointed nuncio at Munich, Pacelli, was being prepared. Main Headquarters was not informed of this event either.

The attempt at a separate peace by the House of Parma and the peace proposals of the Pope (see Chapter XIII.) overlap.

Prince Sixtus ends his report thus:

"On October 2, 1917, the Emperor Karl (through Count Czernin) again offered peace, with the words: 'Now we have our hands free.' [It was in these days that the German concentration for the attack in the direction of Udine was being completed!—The Author.] A week later, on October 9, Kühlmann in Berlin was also talking about peace, but *his* words were: 'As far as Alsace-Lorraine is concerned, never!'

"Vienna could still be separated from Berlin, and so it was

enough to get into negotiation with Vienna and leave Berlin out of account. Instead of doing so, on October 12 Monsieur Ribot thought it better to regard Vienna and Berlin as being in the same boat. He maintained that the Austrian offer had conceded nothing to Italy, and, as we can now see, he was not accurate.

"Then came Caporetto on October 24 [The offensive of the Germano-Austrian army against Italy.—The Author], and on December 6 Count Czernin declared that in future the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy would fight as hard for Strasburg as the German Empire for Trieste."

In the "Hamburger Nachrichten," Count Wedel writes:

In the late autumn and winter (according to the report of April 12, a winter campaign was absolutely out of the question) our allies, with German help, conquered Venetia in a brilliant offensive. In Vienna confidence replaced depression. There was no more talk of surrendering territory, and men had other ambitions in spite of the longing for peace.

When Herr Michaelis paid his inaugural visit to Vienna in the summer of 1917 Czernin repeated his proposal—the cession of Alsace-Lorraine to France in return for compensation in the shape of Poland and Galicia—for the last time, so far as I am aware. By itself the present of Poland was of doubtful value; we should have lost Alsace-Lorraine, and it would have been a peace of defeat. Herr Michaelis said as much frankly, but expressed his wish to bear the suggestion in mind, though we were not yet compelled to buy peace at such a price. To-day it may possibly be said that we should have done better to consider it. It is just as wise as to say that our very best course would have been to give up Alsace-Lorraine in the critical days of 1914 so that we could avoid the war altogether. There are certain things which a State dare not do. It cannot admit defeat when its armies on all the fronts are standing victorious on hostile soil and the home situation is secure in spite of many privations. That would be an incomprehensible surrender and the consequences of such a step would be incalculable. A State can only admit defeat and draw the appropriate inferences when the nation sees defeat, or at least feels the approach of defeat.

5.

In April, 1918, the letters of the Emperor Karl to his brother-in-law, Prince Sixtus of Parma, were published in Paris. The events which led to this and subsequent occurrences are described in detail by General von Cramon in his memoirs,

"Unser Österreich-Ungarischer Bundesgenosse im Weltkriege," published by Mittler and Son. The letters caused great excitement among the German public, and even in Vienna (and especially the Austro-Hungarian army) strong feeling was shown against the Emperor Karl. Count Czernin handed in his resignation. In my "War Memories" I called him loyal. The publications of General von Cramon and Prince Sixtus, and the attitude of the Emperor Karl certainly make it a matter of doubt. The Emperor Karl says that Count Czernin was fully informed. According to the "Vossische Zeitung" of February 26, 1920, the following words are to be found in a letter from Count Czernin to the Empress Zita, dated February 17, 1917: "Applying the arguments of Your Majesty at my audience to-day, I should consider it a matter of the greatest importance if Prince Sixtus came to see Your Majesty himself. If Your Majesty could discuss matters personally with him, our affairs would make real progress." I must leave History to pronounce judgment on Count Czernin, who has brought such immeasurable sorrow to the Dual Monarchy and Germany.

The Emperor Karl came to Spa in May to make his excuses for his letters. At least, that is what we at Main Headquarters thought. His visit was baptized "the Canossa Visit." As a matter of fact the visit was a victory for the Dual Monarchy. Little was done to rescue the Field-Marshal and myself from the uncertainty we felt with regard to the agreements that were there made with Austria-Hungary on the Polish question. We thought that under the impression produced by the publication of the Emperor's letters definite arrangements should have been arrived at.

I look at the matter in a different light now. I suspect, and do not hesitate to say so, that the German Government was really informed about the peace efforts of Austria-Hungary. There was, therefore, no reason to demand any "expiation" from the Dual Monarchy.

CHAPTER XII

THE MINISTERIAL CRISIS AND THE PEACE RESOLUTION OF JULY, 1917

No.	Registered No.	To	Contents.
1	II. No. 58049, 19/6/17.	Imperial Chancellor.	Letter from Main Headquarters.
2	R.K. No. 13370 K. J. 25/6/17.	Field-Marshal von Hindenburg.	Reply of the Imperial Chancellor.
3	5/7/17.	—	The Imperial Chancellor to His Majesty.
4	II. No. 58049, 7/7/17.	Imperial Chancellor.	Reply of Main Headquarters to the Imperial Chancellor's letter of June 25.
5	—	—	Extracts from documents on the Ministerial crisis and my attempted resignation on July 12.
6	—	—	Notes of Colonel Bauer on July 12, 1917, of the conference of members of Parliament with His Imperial Highness the Crown Prince.
7	—	—	Note of Major von Harbou of the conference on July 13 between Main Headquarters and certain deputies.
8	—	—	The Reichstag's Peace Resolution of July 19, 1917.
9	—	—	Count Czernin on the origin of the Peace Resolution.

I.

"Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army.

"II. No. 58049.

"G.H.Q.,

"19/6/17.

"To the Imperial Chancellor.

"I gather from the pages of the press and reports of all kinds that there is a widespread opinion at home that the war will end this autumn at the latest.

"I regard such hopes as a serious danger. If they are not realized they will lead to a sapping of our determination to hold out and a loss of confidence in the authorities.

"I therefore consider it necessary to limit these hopes and enlighten public opinion as to the true position. Taking that position as a whole, it appears to be as follows:

"The submarine campaign will certainly compel our enemies —or at least some of our enemies—to make peace if it is prosecuted with ruthless energy and for a sufficient length of time. At the moment there is no method of destroying our U-boats on such a scale that their total number is diminished, and we may hope that it may be so for a considerable time. It is quite impossible to make up the losses of ships on such a scale that our ultimate success will become questionable.* Before long our enemies will no longer possess the tonnage which is absolutely necessary to bring them sufficient food and raw materials, as well as to transport overseas large numbers of men and great quantities of equipment on the scale required for decisive blows. The aid of America in particular must be considered from that point of view.

"But, more than that, our enemies are faced with the future danger of such a loss of tonnage that after the war they will no longer possess the sea transport which is absolutely essential for their existence. This danger is greatest for England, whose world empire is dependent upon the maintenance of maritime transport.

"These dangers are certainly realized by clear-thinking men among our enemies. If, in spite of the facts—I am thinking primarily of England, France and the United States—they are still intent on continuing the war, it is because they are calculating on the collapse of Germany and her allies before they collapse themselves. Perhaps they hope to accelerate that collapse in the military field by a victory on land. But they

* This was proved to be perfectly accurate, though the contrary has often been maintained. [The Author.]

expect it most of all as the effect of economic and internal political developments; that is, food difficulties and the shortage of raw materials, faction, dissatisfaction and the victory of the German radical Social Democracy. They base their calculations on the decay of our internal powers of resistance, the growth of international tendencies, our food situation and our longings for peace, which are, I am sorry to say, announced so loudly in many quarters.

"As long as our enemies are inspired by these hopes they will continue the war obstinately, for it makes an enormous difference to our enemies, especially those in the west, whether Germany has collapsed or not when peace is concluded. It is only when Germany has been stricken to the ground that England can realize the most important of her war aims—the preservation of her maritime ascendancy by excluding the submarine as a war or trade weapon, and the destruction of Germany's commercial competition—and France obtain a peace which satisfies her national vanity. They will therefore—so long as they expect us to collapse before long—put up with food shortages and allow the war to become gradually less intense. We can be quite certain that we need not expect any relenting on the part of our enemies until their food difficulties threaten their destruction.

"When that moment will be reached, whether in the autumn, winter or next spring, no one can say with certainty. All that is certain to me is that we are in a position to wait quietly for victory. In a military sense our position is secure and will remain so. Our food situation will not be worse than our enemies'. All that is required is that both we and our Allies should strengthen our unity at home and preserve the will to hold out. I do not think that the solution of this problem should be difficult if it is made clear to every individual that time is on our side, that we can stand another winter as well as our enemies, that a premature surrender would mean a hopeless future, both for the State and every citizen, whereas a

triumphant resistance—in the way in which the field army has held out for years in extremely difficult circumstances—would certainly bring us and our allies a peace freed from the restrictions and hampering influences which had existed before the war. On the other hand, we should have to bear the old burdens if we gave in too soon.

"Moreover, such a strengthening of our inward resolution would soonest convince our enemies of the futility of continuing the war until their own domestic conditions began to spell their ruin. It is obvious that every moan over disappointed hopes, every expression of exhaustion or the longing for peace on the part of our allies and ourselves, every phrase about the impossibility of facing another winter campaign only tend to prolong the war.

(Signed) "VON HINDENBURG."

2.

"The Imperial Chancellor.
"R.K. No. 13370 K. J.

"Berlin,
"25/6/1917.

"I agree with Your Excellency that at the present stage of the war the most important matter is to maintain the moral resolution of the nation. The prevailing idea of the rapid and overwhelming effects of the submarine campaign has been recognized to be exaggerated. The result is that the popular and certain anticipations of the end of the war before the autumn—anticipations which have been stimulated even in communications between the front and the interior—have collapsed. If the depression is to be remedied once more, it is our first duty to fight our economic troubles. Although the quality of the harvest, to which the greatest importance is attached, is more or less independent of human agency, with regard to the coal supply I must refer to the information

which the Secretary of State for the Interior has recently furnished.

"As regards the description of the effects to be anticipated from the further developments of the U-boat campaign, notwithstanding my confidence I think that a word of caution is required. The assumptions based on statistics have proved themselves too unreliable to be repeated with the force of conviction. On the other hand, the suppression of internal faction must be pursued with all our might. Questions of war aims must be left alone and in no case allowed to become a matter in which the different sections of the nation, each following its party leanings and invoking the support of military and political authorities, can be played off against each other. The prospects of a peace which we could dictate are postponed to so dim and distant a future that it could only lead to fresh and disastrous disappointments if we played with the illusion of a 'fat' peace on the long and hard way we still have to go. On the other hand, the only fact that seems to me to need the sharpest emphasis is that we are faced with the existence of helots if we yield, so long as there is no inclination for peace among our enemies. A root-and-branch denunciation of the idea of a peace of understanding must, therefore, be avoided. If the idea became prevalent that in the present military situation we rejected all chances of peace because certain of our war aims were unrealizable we should certainly find that the effect on the resolution of the public at home was incalculable. Moreover, regard for Austria-Hungary, where anti-German feeling is steadily on the increase, points emphatically to the same conclusion.

"His Majesty's eastern proclamation has shown the way for the reformation in our domestic affairs. I will not stop to discuss how far these questions are agitating men's minds in the trenches and on the lines of communication, although I regard the view that little interest is taken in these matters there as false. But in any case these questions claim the most

careful attention at home. The widespread opinion, which is very difficult to combat, that the enemies of the new order would rejoice at a strong and perhaps ultimately decisive reaction, gives an impetus to the growing unrest which inspires radical demands and undermines the whole situation.

"In view of these considerations I judge the military situation as follows.

"After autumn Austria-Hungary will have great difficulty in holding out. It seems quite impossible that England should meanwhile have been compelled to capitulate. Even if we were in a position to continue the war over the winter by ourselves, we could not rely on completely overcoming our enemies by the submarine operations next spring or, at any rate, within a period which can be calculated beforehand. Of course a submarine campaign carried out with ruthless energy will destroy more tonnage than can be constructed. Yet no one can say with certainty after what point the continuation of the war will become actually impossible for our enemies. In all human probability that point will only be reached at a time which we could not reasonably anticipate. On the other hand, there is some prospect that even if we cannot actually defeat England we can bring her to compromise at the right time. A condition precedent to this eventuality is that England, as the soul of the war, decides to negotiate for peace. The development of affairs in Russia may have some effect in that direction, but is not likely to be decisive in itself. It is true that in France the voices are multiplying which announce a growing war weariness and the first signs that the Poincaré regime is tottering. But after the entry of America into the war a collapse of France which would compel her to make peace is scarcely to be hoped for any longer. There remains only England.

"It is our political and military task to weaken England as much as possible by an energetic prosecution of the U-boat campaign, while avoiding anything which could impede

England's decision to enter into peace negotiations. I regard such hopes as illusory so long as Lloyd George remains at the helm. His position no longer seems to be perfectly secure. But it could only be actually endangered if the war weariness of the broad masses of the English nation increased and the intelligent ruling classes came to realize that on consideration the ending of the war was preferable to its continuation. Of course, the conviction of our invincibility, both within and without, is vital for such a development. We must therefore make that the crux of the matter. We could help from outside by avoiding irritating the chauvinistic and fanatical instincts of the English nation without cause. There is no doubt that the last aerial attack on London has had a disastrous effect in this respect. According to reliable reports the anger of the English public has reached such a pitch that English statesmen who were not averse to making peace have declared that no English government which was willing to treat with Germany after such an occurrence would be able to withstand the indignation of the nation for a day. As I am unable to believe that such aerial attacks are absolutely necessary from the military point of view, may I be allowed to suggest that they be given up, in view of their disastrous political effects.

(Signed) "VON BETHMANN-HOLLWEG."

3.

"Berlin,
"5/7/1917.

"To FIELD-MARSHAL VON HINDENBURG.

"His Majesty has commanded me to send you the following telegram:

(Signed) "ILSEMANN."

"I have received Your Majesty's gracious telegram with respectful gratitude. The results for June of our submarine campaign are the best answer to Lloyd George's boasting, and

will help to restore the public *moral*, which is low to-day. On July 2, at my conference with the leaders I laid great emphasis on the good progress of our submarine campaign and expressed my perfect confidence in its ultimate success. Secretaries of State von Capelle and Helfferich, assisted by the War Minister, ably seconded me on this occasion. On July 3, Helfferich told the main committee of the Reichstag that the submarine campaign would inevitably spell England's ruin if we stood fast. I, myself, devote all my energies to emphasizing the fact wherever I go.

"The insistence on this point, which Your Majesty has commanded, is doubly necessary if we are to fight down the disappointment which has unfortunately everywhere taken the place of the universal hope that the collapse of England would have materialized by now.

"My speech in the Reichstag will be inspired by a very confident tone without needing to give the impression that we have no other weapons than torpedoes in our armoury.

"In the last few days the harvest prospects in the east seem to have improved, thanks to rain.

"My respectful good wishes go with Your Majesty on your approaching journey to Vienna.

(Signed) "VON BETHMANN-HOLLWEG."

4.

"Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army.
"II. No. 58049.
"Ref. Memo. R. K. No. 13370.

"G.H.Q.,
"7/7/1917.

"TO THE IMPERIAL CHANCELLOR.

"I have the honour of replying to Your Excellency's letter of June 25.

"I agree with Your Excellency that public opinion at home is

undoubtedly depressed. Yet, unlike Your Excellency, I think that the reason for it is not primarily the disappointed hopes of an early end of the war but that it must be sought in greatly increasing measure in economic troubles and domestic strife. In my opinion this appears *inter alia* in the regular reports furnished to me by the acting G. O's C. of the Corps Districts, and even in the general impression one gathers from the press.

"The nation is angry, and with justice, that promises with regard to the food situation cannot be kept.

"It is prepared frankly to face *every* eventuality which is put squarely before it, if it is itself convinced that the Government is doing everything in its power to avert avoidable suffering. It must also be in a position to see that everything is done *fairly*. The failure to keep promises, however, has seriously shaken the confidence of the nation in its professional leaders—the officials. The public also see that successful measures are not taken against profiteering and illicit trading. Further, it can hardly be disputed that more ought to have been done, and done sooner, in the matter of substitute fodder and the drying of food products.

"Your Excellency refers in set terms to the coal supply. As early as the end of 1916, when I was in Berlin, I verbally drew the attention of the government authorities concerned to the necessity of wholesale measures in the coal question. On February 20, 1917, in the letter registered II. 47915 op., I repeated my views that a coal controller must be appointed at once, and laid emphasis on the fact that only a real personality armed with the most extensive powers could cope with the problem. Events have shown that in any case the late Coal Controller was certainly not equal to it. I am very doubtful whether his powers were large enough. I can only hope that the new Coal Controller is the right man, and that his efficiency will not be hampered by departmental difficulties. If it is now said that safety can be found only in the *immediate* release of 50,000 miners from the field army, I

must state with all emphasis that such a thing is impossible at a moment's notice in times of decisive operations in which the army is called upon to fulfil the duty of standing firm at any price. Since November, 1916, the field army has already surrendered 160,000 expert workers, a very valuable portion of its establishment. Yet, in spite of all, I am hoping to send back the coal miners in time to prevent serious difficulties during the winter. Should that prove impossible, contrary to my expectations, I must insist now—to prevent the formation of other opinions, if possible—that I attribute the blame for such a situation mainly to the omissions and mistakes of earlier times and the original hesitation to take resolute measures. I refuse to allow the responsibility to be unloaded on *my* shoulders, as was the case earlier on, and quite unjustifiably, in the Polish and Belgian questions.

"I believe that, as I have said, the second cause of the discontent is the domestic faction. In ever-increasing measure the unity which marked the beginning of the war has given place to such discord as was never known, even in the worst times before the war. The reason seems to me clear. The influence of irresponsible elements on the national *moral* is stronger than that of the Government and the officials called upon to lead and direct the public. This would never have been the case if the nation had been dominated by the conviction that the Government was going its way with firm resolution, without looking either to the right or left. Such, however, has been the effect on the nation's *moral*—especially in the question of war aims and the new orientation—of regard, not for the welfare of the State as a whole, but for private party and special interests. It has inevitably led to the present domestic strife and controversies.

"I am therefore of opinion that internal difficulties, far more than disappointed hopes of a speedy end of the war, are responsible for the deterioration of the nation's *moral*.

"I cannot refrain from contesting what Your Excellency has

to say about these disappointed hopes in connection with the U-boat campaign and the general situation.

"The field army has adapted itself without difficulty to the idea of another winter campaign. It is obvious to every single soldier in contact with the enemy that we must bear all dangers, privations and hardships until we can secure a profitable peace. I do not think it ought to be difficult to rouse and maintain the same views and sentiments at home if what is at stake is once more made clear to the nation by the proper authorities. Your Excellency emphasizes very properly that we are faced with the fate of helots if we give in, as long as there is no inclination for peace among our enemies. On the other hand, Your Excellency considers that it is quite impossible to *compel* our enemies to make peace, and Your Excellency therefore sees the solution of the problem in a peace of understanding, which must be reached by the autumn if Austria-Hungary is to be kept at her post. With that end in view the U-boat campaign must be prosecuted with the greatest energy, and for the rest everything must be avoided which might put obstacles in the way of England's decision to enter into peace negotiations.

"I do not think that England will be ready for a peace of understanding as long as she still hopes that Germany will collapse before herself. Least of all will she be inclined for such a peace if Austria-Hungary is thinking of falling out. The advantages which England would derive from continuing the war until Germany collapsed are so enormous in comparison with those to be obtained from a peace of understanding that she will face further war for a considerable time with her usual energy and determination. Of that I have no doubt whatever, and every page of English history proves it. But England will be ready for a 'peace of understanding' the moment she realizes that her own collapse will precede that of Germany. We can be certain that any English peace feelers are a proof of her approaching mortal agony. In my opinion it would be a

disaster to our political and economic future if we accepted such an English 'peace of understanding,' unless we were compelled to make peace offhand by the secession of Austria-Hungary and our own imminent collapse. But I regard so unfavourable a conjunction of circumstances as extremely improbable. I do not share your Excellency's opinion that *all* the assumptions based on statistics have proved themselves utterly unfounded and that the necessity for England to make peace has been postponed to a quite remote future.* I adhere firmly to the standpoint I stated clearly in my II. No. 58049, of June 19, 1917.

"We cannot say with certainty at what moment the entire economic structure of our enemies will collapse; but I regard it as certain that it will be within a calculable period.

"Until that moment we must do all we can to keep Austria on her legs. The best method is, and remains, our own determination! If we give in earlier we shall be faced with the existence of helots if we conclude a 'peace of understanding,' for which, I repeat, England will not be ready until her collapse is imminent. Germany's fight for her economic existence against the ring which England has closed round us, and never ceases to strengthen, would be as hopeless as if we had been completely defeated.

"We must, therefore, prosecute the war with all our resources and the greatest intensity. Your Excellency deprecates the aerial attacks on London. I do not think the English nature is such that anything can be done with them by conciliation or revealing a desire to spare them. The military advantages are great. They keep a large amount of war material away from the French front and destroy important enemy establishments of various kinds. It is regrettable, but inevitable, that they cause the loss of innocent lives as well. With a view to arriving at a better understanding of the different view held

* It was only after the conclusion of the armistice that we found out what was actually the state of public feeling at that time. [The Author.]

by Your Excellency I should be glad if you would acquaint me with the facts on which you base your view that the recent aerial attack on London has aroused the passions of the English nation to a disastrous degree, and also give me the names of the statesmen* who were agreeable to making peace before this raid but have now made the declarations referred to by Your Excellency.

(Signed) "VON HINDENBURG."

5.

DOCUMENTS ON THE MINISTERIAL CRISIS

On the afternoon of July 6 the Field-Marshal telegraphed to his Majesty the Kaiser (in Vienna): "For reasons of internal politics the War Minister considers that a Crown Council with Your Majesty, myself and General Ludendorff is necessary immediately after Your Majesty's return to Berlin. I humbly beg Your Majesty graciously to summon this council. I am going to Berlin to-night."

The Imperial Chancellor was informed of this step by the War Minister and the latter was instructed that Main Headquarters was prepared, with His Majesty's approval, to talk with individual deputies about the military situation.

On His Majesty's arrival in Berlin at 3.26 p.m. on July 7 he went straight to the Imperial Chancellor, at the latter's express request. At the ensuing Crown Council with Main Headquarters and the War Minister at Bellevue Castle, His Majesty decided that the council was concerned with a question of internal politics with which the military authorities had nothing to do. Main Headquarters accordingly returned to Kreuznach at 11 p.m. on July 7.

At 11 o'clock in the morning of July 9 Lieutenant-Colonel von Haeften reported that a "programme of demands" had been drawn up by the following four fractions of the Reich-

* No answer was ever received on this point.

stag—National Liberals, Centre, Independents and Social Democrats, and was to be laid before the Imperial Chancellor the same day. Equal universal suffrage for Prussia and a parliamentary ministry. The Chancellor would use his *prevenire*. His Majesty was said to approve of that step, and a Crown Council was to be held at six o'clock in the evening. This latter had been confirmed to Lieutenant-Colonel von Haeften by Secretary of State Solf.

At 1 a.m. the following telegram was sent from Kreuznach to the Chief of the Military Cabinet:

"Please inform whether there is to be a Crown Council. In case of necessity Main Headquarters should not be left unheard if questions are discussed which affect the military situation and the spirit of the army. I consider it my duty to say so, and particularly to point out that every decision on internal political questions means developments in our quarter which, in view of their reaction on foreign countries and the *moral* of our own armies, must be taken into consideration by Main Headquarters in judging military operations.

(Signed) "VON HINDENBURG."

The following reply was returned at 10 p.m.:

"His Majesty has given the following answer to Your Excellency's telegram:

"'The Crown Council has been summoned by the King of Prussia with a view to enlightening him on Prussian domestic affairs. A decision has not been given. The army is represented by the War Minister, as the Constitution requires. I do not regard the presence of the Supreme Command as necessary.

(Signed) "'WILHELM.'

"BARON VON LYNCKER,

"Chief of the Military Cabinet."

At 1 a.m. Colonel von Haeften reported that this morning, in the main committee of the Reichstag, Deputy Stresemann had asked the Imperial Chancellor for information as to why the Supreme Command had been in Berlin and left again so

hastily. A request had been made that Main Headquarters should explain the military situation. It was said to be prepared to do so, but had been prevented by the political authorities. The explanation was required in order to be able to take decisions.

The Imperial Chancellor had replied unfavourably. A conflict appeared to be beginning.

At 11 a.m. on July 10 Colonel von Haefţen reported as follows:

"Yesterday's Crown Council led to no result. The majority of the Ministers and Secretaries of State were present. His Majesty had not yet decided on his attitude."

The Chancellor handed in his resignation. The same day the following telegram was sent to Colonel-General von Plessen:

"If there is really to be a change of Chancellor, I may remark that as I myself hardly know Prince Bülow, I have no interest in his appointment, but that he has been pointed out to me from many quarters as the only man in a position to take over the onerous inheritance. I should, therefore, be able to work well with him if His Majesty should once more grant him his confidence."

At 5 p.m. Lieutenant-Colonel von Haeften reported: "The summoning of yesterday's Crown Council—Secretaries of State and Prussian Ministers—was a manœuvre of the Chancellor. The majority of the Prussian Ministers and one Secretary of State have decided against the introduction of the equal suffrage."

At 1 p.m. on July 11 Lieutenant-Colonel von Haeften reported: "At His Majesty's command the Crown Prince has come to Berlin. Ambassador Prince Hohenlohe handed in a telegram from Vienna in which Austria requests that the Chancellor should not be dismissed and that in any case Prince Bülow should not be appointed."

The Chancellor's proffered resignation was therefore declined on July 11.

In the morning of July 12 the Crown Prince received six party leaders. Four of them, Count Westarp, Erzberger, Stresemann and Martin, asked for an immediate change of Chancellor; von Payer and David reserved opinion.

At 5 p.m. the Crown Prince, bearing a report drawn up on the basis of his conversation with the party leaders, was received by the Kaiser.

At 2.50 p.m. Captain von Hülsen handed to General Baron von Lyncker the cipher telegrams he had received from the Field-Marshal and General Ludendorff about the refusal of the offer to resign.

My request for permission to resign was sent off at 7.31 p.m.

GENERAL LUDENDORFF'S REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO RESIGN

"G.H.Q.,
"12/7/1917.

"To His Majesty the Kaiser and King.

"In the most serious crisis which Germany and Prussia have ever known Your Majesty has decided to retain in office the present political head, the Chancellor.

"Your Majesty knows that it is impossible for me, as a responsible member of the Supreme Command, to feel that confidence in the Imperial Chancellor which, after the war can no longer be prosecuted as a purely military affair, is absolutely essential for useful co-operation between the Imperial Chancellor and the Supreme Command if the war is to be brought to a successful conclusion. The Fatherland is bound to suffer from this lack of confident co-operation. The fact that Your Majesty ultimately decides cannot prevent it.

"I am unable to serve Your Majesty any longer in my position and humbly beg Your Majesty graciously to permit me to resign. (Signed) "Ludendorff,
"General of Infantry and
First Quartermaster-General."

About 4.25 p.m. on the 12th the following telegram arrived at Kreuznach:

"Parties not yet agreed over the form of an offer of peace. What is required is a comprehensive representation to His Majesty by the army chiefs, stating that the Chancellor's approval of such an offer, which might take the form of a peace of renunciation, would be the greatest misfortune and must have the most disastrous influence on the army.

"I am trying to use my influence in the same direction, but consider the intervention of Main Headquarters necessary. Haste is essential, as it is possible that a declaration on the part of the Chancellor may be demanded at the committee to-morrow morning. I should be grateful to know what you do.

"VON STEIN."

The result was the following telegram, which was sent off at 6.25 p.m.:

"TO HIS MAJESTY THE KAISER AND KING.

"The War Minister informs me that the Reichstag is intending to make a declaration in the shape of a peace offer, which might be regarded as a peace of renunciation. I must offer the most serious objections to such a declaration, as it would intensify the existing unrest in the army and would be regarded as a sign of internal weakness at the present moment. In view of the declarations of enemy countries it would meet with no welcome, but rather strengthen the determination of our enemies to fight on.

"Remembering the army I humbly beg Your Majesty graciously to command the Government to prevent such a declaration.

"VON HINDENBURG,
"Field-Marshal."

Herr Ballin was received in conference by His Majesty in the evening.

At 9.30 p.m. a telegram arrived conveying a command to Main Headquarters to go to Berlin at once.

At 9.58 a.m. on July 13 Main Headquarters arrived in Berlin and were received at the station by General Baron von Lyncker. At 11 a.m. they reported to His Majesty at Bellevue Castle. The Chancellor's request to be allowed to resign had already been granted.

On July 14 Dr. Michaelis, an Under-Secretary of State, was appointed Imperial Chancellor.

6.

Minutes of July 12, 1917, of the Conference of Deputies with His Imperial Highness the Crown Prince.

DRAWN UP BY COLONEL BAUER.

1. Count Westarp.—Considers the replacement of the Chancellor unnecessary on constitutional grounds. But he considers him an unsuitable man to cope with the difficult position in which we find ourselves placed. Westarp is against the equal suffrage in Prussia, which he would regard as a disaster for Prussia and Germany. In the same way he believes that the introduction of a parliamentary régime is a false step because it would diminish the rights of the Crown.

He regards any Chancellor as impossible who could approve the Reichstag's Peace Resolution, and cannot support him. He thinks the Resolution will strengthen the enemy, and thus regards the step as a stab in the back for the army which is fighting so valiantly.

All this means that the Chancellor is lacking in efficiency and resolution. His democratic frame of mind keeps him apart. He (Westarp) regards him as quite unfitted to conduct the business of government.

2. Stresemann.—The party considers a change of Chancellor a most essential step. He has allowed a state of mind to grow up among the public which is nothing less than dangerous. No one has any confidence in him and his Government. That state of mind must not continue or we are lost. He

has always been flabby, even after great military victories, e.g., Rumania. What would not Briand have done in those circumstances? Bethmann-Hollweg has not led the nation, so that it lives in perpetual anxiety. He never takes responsibility, has no ideas and lets everything slide. Everyone has the impression that he fails in everything, and that we are bound to collapse.

The liberal reforms, which Stresemann regards as desirable in themselves, must come as a present from the Crown instead of being as it were wrung from the Crown.

The "parliamentarization" of the Ministry is of little use in itself so long as Bethmann-Hollweg remains in power, as he cannot lead. This lead must come from the power above which has brought the country so much national glory.

3. Mertin (Agricultural Union).—The question of a change of Chancellor is of secondary importance to the Resolution. If the Chancellor is behind it we cannot follow him. The Resolution is a disaster.

For the rest, we have neither supported nor overthrown him, though we are clear that many serious mistakes have been made. We do not think he is in a position to govern successfully any longer. At the moment the situation is such that co-operation with him is impossible (though a change in favour of a Bavarian would appear to be an even greater misfortune).

The Reichstag and the Government must get into closer touch by bringing members of the Reichstag into the Government. But no "Parliamentary Government," to which we object.

4. His Excellency von Payer (Independent People's Party).—The policy of the Chancellor has been along lines which correspond to those of his (Payer's) party. He (Payer) had thus no reason to desire a change of chancellor and a leap into the unknown. But there are other currents of opinion which flow in the opposite direction and may not be underestimated

Moreover, it seems to him that the relations between the General Staff and the Imperial Chancellor are not all that could be desired. Yet in spite of that, he (Payer) has hitherto seen no obstacle to keeping the Chancellor, for a change would mean unrest, because men would still be uncertain about the future. He (Payer) trusts the Chancellor, in spite of his faults which are admitted, to bring the war to a victorious conclusion. The Imperial Chancellor certainly suffers from irresolution, etc. Nevertheless, at the moment von Payer sees no overwhelming necessity to get rid of the Chancellor. He cannot say whether it will become necessary in the future.

5. Erzberger (Centre).—The leader of the party had decided and informed the Chancellor that a change in the office of Chancellor was necessary, but the time of his resignation must be left to the loyal judgment of Bethmann-Hollweg.

Co-operation is impossible. If he remains in office the situation will become yet more difficult, even after concessions have been made, and will remain intolerable.

He regards the action of Bethmann-Hollweg in preventing deputies from seeing Hindenburg and Ludendorff as a slap in the face. Even concessions on the part of the Crown can do no good if he remains. There must be a new man who must then carry through the necessary reforms. It is impossible for things to be worse under a new Chancellor.

For the Eastern Proclamation the Crown will not be thanked because it was indefinite. The plural franchise could have been given then and everybody would have been satisfied with it. The demands have now been raised.

The Imperial Chancellor misses every opportunity and thus hinders the conclusion of peace. He cannot make peace with America at the earliest before 1921, when Wilson leaves office.

The Imperial Chancellor must go. He is an obstacle to peace, he hesitates over everything, and things will get worse rather than better.

Erzberger then goes into the reasons for his action with

regard to the U-boats. The Government promised that the U-boats would triumph in five months. That has proved false. The war is still continuing and the nation has to revise its hopes. That is a difficult matter. With a view to making a start, Erzberger broached the topic. The Government hedged again. They ought to have said that they had made a mistake. Instead of doing so they produced fresh figures and hedged once more. The public thus lost all confidence in the statements of the Government.

With regard to the opposition of Austria to Bethmann's departure, Erzberger thinks the whole thing has been arranged. He knows the imperial family and the ministers. In his opinion any *peace* Chancellor would be welcome. Moreover, Austria has no right to intervene. Germany would be a sort of political slave. Up to the present he had understood we were the leaders. Therefore Austria's objection is untenable. Our action must not be dependent on foreign countries.

6. Dr. David.—The party has not gone into the question of a change of Chancellor. It wishes to bring the franchise question up in the Reichstag and secure unity in the nation on the subject of war aims, so that the Entente will see what we really want and the public will remain calm. With that end in view the fraction aims at a clear announcement in the Reichstag.

This is how matters stand at the moment. If the Chancellor adopts this programme we have no reason to think of changing him. Unfortunately, the personality of the Chancellor can mean obstacles in the path of making peace, because too much importance can be attached to declarations by him.

David then advocated a peace of understanding. The present Reichstag Resolution may be regarded as an interpretation of our peace offer of December 12, 1916. Further, in discussing Bethmann-Hollweg the question of America must be considered. Wilson started to take action for peace in

December, 1916. Then came our peace offer. Wilson persevered in his course nevertheless, and let us know that he intended to take steps for peace in February. Then the unrestricted U-boat campaign began. He regarded that as an insult. Hence his turning to Lloyd George and being driven into his arms. That is the American version.

But though it is possible that the person of the Chancellor may mean difficulties for peace, we ought to wait a while. He considers the parliamentarization of the Government necessary in order that the Government should, so to speak, "cover" the Resolution. That would make it difficult for the Entente to discredit the Resolution. In that way an understanding could be reached, for we must make peace soon. The party adopts the standpoint that a peace without annexations and indemnities is a victory for us. The neutrals also regard it in the same light, for the Entente will have to give up much more than we shall. It is only superficially that the *status quo ante* will reproduce the situation of 1914, for a Germanic national group will come into existence as a Central European *bloc*. Besides, an understanding with Russia is possible. Thus a "Scheidemann Peace" would be a brilliant success for us.

Dr. David does not consider a "peace offer" necessary. In his opinion the Reichstag Resolution is not a fresh offer of peace. The old one still holds good. All that will happen is that its principles will be explained.

Dr. David believes that the prospect of peace will give us a breathing space. The desire for peace is too strong.

Further, he regards great progressive reforms as important if the public *moral* is to be raised. Therefore, if Bethmann-Hollweg accepts the Resolution there will be no reason for a change. It is difficult to say how far a change of Chancellor would affect affairs abroad. The diplomatic service must inquire into that. But if progress in the direction of peace is menaced by Bethmann-Hollweg, the Chancellor must go.

There are two political centres, Main Headquarters and the Government. The Imperial Chancellor hangs between them. The Government does not really know where it is going. The system is antiquated. Even the Crown holds aloof from the Government. The Crown must lose none of its rights, but the bureaucracy must be suppressed. The sources from which the Government is recruited must therefore be changed.

7.
CONFERENCE

between the Field-Marshal and the First Quartermaster-General and certain members of the Reichstag on July 13, 1917.

(Recorded by Major von Harbou.)

There appeared two deputies each from the Independent People's Party, the Centre, the Social Democrats, the Conservatives, the National Liberals, the German Party, and one deputy from the Polish fraction. The representatives of the different parties appeared in the above order; only the Centre and the Social Democrats came together to the conference. The duration of each conference was fixed at the outset at a quarter of an hour, beginning at 5 p.m. The whole series of conferences, however, took a considerably longer time.

Each separate conference was opened by the Field-Marshal with a few introductory words, and General Ludendorff's exposition of the situation followed.

That exposition was as follows (summary):

Our military situation at the moment can best be described by comparison with last year. In the summer of 1916 things were in a bad way in the east: the Russians had won great victories at many points. We could not see how far those successes could be developed and whether we should succeed in calling a halt to their advance. In that evil plight Rumania appeared as a new enemy. It was questionable whether

sufficient troops could be got together against the Rumanian army, even for a pure defensive, for in the west also the Germans were involved in a difficult defensive battle—the Somme battle—which made the heaviest demands on their forces. The general situation was thus unfavourable.

But now, the summer of 1917, the Somme battle is over: the enemy was defeated. The further onslaughts of our western foes in 1917 have also failed. We can face fresh attacks, which will certainly come, with complete confidence. Every man in Germany may be convinced that the position in the west is secure.

The position in the east is good. The troops of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy have given way at some points. In some places individual Slav units, and in others the Austrian command, have failed. The commanders in question have been replaced. However, the Russian successes have had no kind of influence on the general situation and further local successes can make no difference, for in the opinion of German officers who are on the battle front the Russian army is bad, and even worse than before. It is true that Kerensky has succeeded in inducing a part of the army to attack, but there is no doubt that the offensive capacity of the enemy has suffered as a result of the revolution.

Main Headquarters approved the intensified U-boat campaign for two reasons. The superiority of our western opponents in war material, paticularly guns and ammunition, was so great last year that if it had gone on increasing—i.e., by the unrestricted import from America and the maintenance of the enemy's war industries at their highest level—we should have been faced with serious dangers on the western front in 1917. These dangers could only be diminished by the unrestricted submarine campaign. If we had not begun it no one could say whether we should now still be holding firm on the western front. The success that was anticipated for the U-boat operations has materialized. There is no doubt that

our enemies have a smaller superiority in material than last year, and we know from many indications that our foes are contending with serious difficulties in production. England is suffering from a shortage of timber and supplying less coal; France and Italy are receiving less coal. As a result the enemy's munitions industries are no longer working at the height of their capacity. The Salonica enterprise has been restricted. Thus in spite of the entry of America into the war our military task has been facilitated by the submarine war.

That was one reason for the U-boat campaign. The second was of a more general nature. If we embarked on the intensified operations we could assume with confidence that the great loss of enemy tonnage would gradually paralyse the determination of our enemies, as their living conditions at home would be seriously affected. That assumption is and remains well-founded. We cannot say at what moment the war industry of our opponents will break down, but it will come.

We reckoned beforehand with the *American declaration of war* as a consequence of the intensified U-boat campaign. It could not be allowed to be an obstacle to the submarine campaign, as without that campaign our enemies would have been able to overcome us, while on the other hand great and decisive aid from the United States will be made an extremely difficult matter on account of the shortage of tonnage. But before then we shall have to reckon with a reinforcement—which hits us in a sensitive spot—in the shape of a large quota of American squadrons for the enemy's aerial forces. Counter-measures have been taken on our side. For the rest, an American army of 500,000 men with equipment would require 3½ to 4 millions of tonnage for its transport and 1½ million tons for its permanent supply. This tonnage can only be obtained by further reduction of industrial activity for war purposes. It must also be remembered that the war material which the United States is now using itself would be employed against us even if the States took no active part in the war.

The American danger is thus not great at first. We shall conquer if the nation stands firm and united behind the army. To that end the National Assembly must help, just as we help the homeland by giving up our men and material for the coal mines, industry and agriculture. We are not guarding the interests of the army alone.

In detail:

The Independent deputies (Payer, Fischbeck):

Is a decisive victory on land possible?

When will the U-boat campaign achieve its object?

Who will hold out longer, the enemy or ourselves?

We cannot continue the war much longer. The difficulties at home are very great and always increasing. There is great anxiety about food. The nation must be given a ray of hope. We must restore confidence at home. There is a great longing for peace and grave doubt whether we have the strength to hold out. We must tell the nation that we are striving for peace and will seize the first real chance to make peace. That will be achieved by the resolution of the Reichstag. At the same time we shall succeed in convincing our enemies that we do not intend them any injustice.

His Excellency Ludendorff: An offensive which would mean a decision is not possible, but the military defeat of Russia has brought her to revolution and reduced the fighting value of the French army. Moreover, the U-boat war will do its work.

The proposed Peace Resolution will fortify the determination of our enemies; they are waiting for signs of weakness on our side and hoping that we shall break up internally. The Resolution will also have a depressing effect on our allies, the army, and wide circles at home. That must be set against the alleged advantages. We bind ourselves to demand *nothing*, while the other side demands *everything*.

The Centre and Social Democrats (Erzberger, Mayer, Scheidemann, Ebert):

His Excellency Ludendorff: The war cannot be decided by arms alone. The nation and the army must co-operate. The more united we are, the sooner we shall get peace.

Deputy Scheidemann (the other deputies adopted practically the same standpoint):

The war cannot be decided by arms this year. What will be the position in the spring if we do not get peace by then? It is extremely difficult to contemplate a winter campaign.

Many are practically starving. There is a feeling of despair abroad. If peace does not come soon it *might* mean collapse. We *must* announce that we are fighting a war of defence, that ours are not Pan-German aims, that we are defending our homes and families, but will give our last drop of blood in that defence. Of what value to us are so-called "strategic" frontiers? The idea of fortresses is overdone. We must not prolong the war by demands for conquests and indemnities. *If we only say so the enemy may collapse.*

Deputy Ebart: It will be difficult for the enemy leaders to continue the war if we pass the Resolution. The Russian Socialists wish to compel the other States of the Entente to a declaration of renunciation. The speech of Thomas is also significant. We must exploit the chance before us.*

* Deputy Ebert was suffering from a grievous illusion. He was defeating his own intentions. Only a short time before the leader of the Social Democratic Party had seen things virtually in their true light. In his book, "The War Aims of the Party in the light of Economic Facts—An Appeal to Thinking Men," he had accurately described the dangers of defeat for the German working man, whose personal fate was at stake while capital was only interested as such. He had concluded with the words:

"But let no one raise the objection that it is wholly impossible that our enemies should reach such a goal—the destruction of Germany's economic position. Germany and her allies are standing isolated in the world, facing a coalition which is greatly superior to us both as regards numbers and available capital, and which commands the aid of all other countries. Yet in spite of all this we believe that our enemies will not succeed in imposing their war aims upon us—*but that confidence stands or falls by the unity of the German nation.* It is solely to that unity that Germany owes the fact that she has been able to defend herself against her enemies hitherto. If we did what the opposition wants us to do, if we—the strongest single party in Germany—abandoned that unity and, as the opposition demands, gave the signal for the destruction of the universal determination to defend ourselves, Germany's fate would

Erzberger and Mayer: What is the situation as regards munitions, the output of guns and the successes of the submarines? Must not the whole world tonnage be regarded as being at England's disposal? We must tell the nation that we have no inordinate ambitions, or unrest will continue.

His Excellency Ludendorff: The munitions position is good. The position as regards guns will certainly improve.

be sealed. As long as our nation, and every part of the nation, remains united, we can consider the danger of economic strangulation as pretty remote. But the moment that unity is lost it is terribly imminent, and will depend solely on the intentions of the hostile coalition.

"Only one thing can show that our attitude is wrong—proof that the enemy Governments are not inspired by the war aim of destroying Germany's economic power and that, on the contrary, they are ready to conclude a peace which will allow our country the same freedom to develop economically which it enjoyed before the war. If that were proved, then, and only then, would it be our duty to use all our influence to bring the war to an end, even against the will of the Government! *But anyone who has not been asleep during the war can no longer be in any doubt about the intentions of the enemy Governments. After the scorn with which they replied to the German offer of peace, after the publication of the whole programme of annexations of the Entente, no more need be said. In cold fact the German nation is fighting solely for the future right to secure sufficient food in its own country for its seventy millions.* And those millions are not only commercial magnates, great industrials and landowners, but consist mainly of the busy working folk in the factories and shops, the mines and the timber yards, and at the plough. We will fight as hard to-day for their future as for the profits of capital. The party feels itself responsible for the destinies of the masses.

"In one generation the working men of Germany have fought their way through. They have won a position of power and created a German labour culture in the teeth of strong opposition in a thousand forms. Even though we were proscribed even a few weeks before the war, we were inspired by one firm conviction—the future is ours! They try to keep us back, but cannot suppress us. The time is approaching which will give us more room and rights in the State and society, and which will at length reward the struggles of a bygone proletarian generation. Such was our position in 1914.

"Then the greatest and strongest powers on earth rose up to humiliate Germany politically and destroy her economically. Our own handiwork, our own future, were thus at stake. The social democracy of Germany did not then stand on one side and let things take their course, but rose up as a protecting shield before the land which represented their own work and their own future hopes. They had enough political sense and education to know that the collapse of the political and economic power of Germany would mean the collapse of German social democracy also. The common phrase, 'in defence of the threatened Fatherland,' had for them the special meaning, 'for the defence of German Socialism.'

"There never was an historical watchword which could base its justification on weightier facts."

From the time of the Peace Resolution onwards the leader of the Social Democratic Party thought only of "Socialism" as he understood it. He thought no more about the threat to the Fatherland. He helped to hasten the advent of the dangers against which he had raised a warning voice in the previous years, dangers which the German workman is realizing and will realize even more when he comes to his senses.

The cause of the delay was the transport crisis which is over.

In considering the Resolution its bad impression on foreign countries and the army must be remembered. The Resolution will only prolong the war. We must not renounce everything beforehand. At the conclusion of peace we must get everything we are entitled to demand as being reasonable.

Scheidemann: We must stop the unrest in the nation. In comparison with that everything else is immaterial. The Resolution is framed in such a way that such acquisitions of territory and indemnities as are necessary are not excluded.

His Excellency Ludendorff: With regard to what has been said about the U-boat war. We need not reckon with world tonnage. Everything is already mortgaged for the war industries of our enemies. The success of the U-boats is to be assessed not by numbers but only by the results actually visible —Salonica, the fact that no wheat is arriving from Australia, shortage of timber in England and of coal in France and Italy. Less and worse ammunition.

Conservatives (Westarp, Heydebrand): They are against the Resolution; both for internal and external reasons. We ought to have no anxiety about conflicts. Heydebrand would like the Reichstag to be dissolved eventually on the issue, "war or peace."

National Liberals (Prince Carolath, Schiffer).

Schiffer: The U-boat campaign was based to a certain extent on doubtful premises: world tonnage, our own capacity to hold out (raw materials, man-power, food, *moral*). We must be able to see our way. Is a decisive offensive possible?

His Excellency Ludendorff: Our enemies do not want peace, and we must simply hold out. We have no inordinate ambitions. The Resolution will have an injurious effect on foreign countries and the army. We must avoid the catch phrase, "understanding." We have no reason to be pessimistic. We have enough raw material and man-power. The U-boat

campaign is going well. We need not reckon with world tonnage. A decisive offensive is not possible. Communications and transport are inadequate for an offensive against Petersburg. We need confidence at home.

The German Faction (Mertin, Bruhn).

Deputy Mertin: Strongly opposes the Resolution. It is a great disaster. The Reichstag has failed. We ought to be thinking about war, not peace.

Deputy Bruhn: The Social Democrats have done very well in the war. We cannot take the responsibility of depriving them of the means by which they think they can keep the nation quiet. Cannot Main Headquarters agree?

His Excellency Ludendorff: He more or less repeated his previous remarks.

8.

THE PEACE RESOLUTION OF THE REICHSTAG OF JULY 19, 1917

"As on August 4, 1914, so on the threshold of the fourth year of war the German nation is inspired by the words in the Speech from the Throne: 'We have no lust of conquest.' Germany took up arms to maintain her freedom and independence and to defend her territorial possessions. The Reichstag is striving for a peace by understanding and the permanent reconciliation of the nations. Annexations by force and political, economic and financial oppression are incompatible with such a peace.

"The Reichstag is averse to all plans which aim at the economic isolation and the embitterment of nations after the peace. The freedom of the seas must be secured. Economic peace alone will prepare the ground for the friendly co-operation of the nations. The Reichstag will give all the help in its power to further the establishment of international legal machinery.

"As long as the enemy Governments do not realize this, as long as they threaten Germany and her allies with robbery and oppression, the German nation will stand together as one man and endure and fight on until her right and that of her allies to life and freedom to develop is secure. United, the German nation is invincible. In this matter the Reichstag knows itself at one with the men who are defending the Fatherland in a heroic struggle. They know they have the everlasting gratitude of the whole nation."

9.

Count Czernin on the Origin of the Peace Resolution in his Speech of December 11, 1918.

"As is well known, the majority in the German Reichstag in the early autumn of 1917 had a hard struggle with the minority —numerically weaker, indeed, but extremely powerful owing to its relations with the German Supreme Command—in the matter of the reply to the Papal Note. At my request one of my friends had several conversations with Herrn Südekum and Erzberger, and through my description of our situation supported them in their efforts to secure the passing of the well-known Peace Resolution. It was on the strength of that description that these two gentlemen carried through the Reichstag a resolution for a peace of understanding, that resolution which has received so much scorn and derision at the hands of the Pan-Germans and other elements."

Note. By the "Papal Note," Count Czernin appears to mean the letter which the nuncio Pacelli handed to His Majesty the Kaiser on June 29, 1917. It seems an accurate inference that Count Czernin, when he had no news from Prince Sixtus about the offer of May 9, moved Rome to take this step. These facts were not known to me in the summer of 1917. [The Author.]

CHAPTER XIII

THE PEACE PROPOSALS OF THE POPE AND THE ENGLISH "PEACE FEELERS" IN AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER, 1917

1. The Imperial Chancellor, von Bethmann-Hollweg, on the chances of peace in the summer of 1917.

2. The Pope's peace proposals.

3. The English reply.

4. Letter of the nuncio Pacelli to the Chancellor, Dr. Michaelis.

5. Dr. Michaelis on the English "peace feelers."

6. My summary in the Crown Council on September 11, 1917.

7. Correspondence between the Imperial Chancellor and the Field-Marshal.

8. The German reply of September 19, 1917, to the Pope's peace proposals.

9. Reply of the German Government to the nuncio Pacelli.

10. Joint declaration of the Imperial Chancellor, Dr. Michaelis, Field-Marshal von Hindenburg, Secretary of State Dr. Helfferich and myself on August 7, 1919.

11. Enemy views.

12. Spanish mediation in London.

13. Statements about conversations with me.

14. Extract from the speech of Count Czernin of December 11, 1918, on the opportunities of making peace.

I.

THE CHANCES OF PEACE IN THE SUMMER OF 1917

By Th. von Bethmann-Hollweg.

(From the "Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung" of Feb. 29, 1920.)

In April and May, 1917, we received indications from the side of France and Belgium (see Chapter XI.—The Author) which revealed a desire for confidential discussions of the chances of concluding peace. Even though the suggestion, which we only too willingly accepted, led to no tangible results, the threads were woven by both sides until the autumn of 1917. Whether the Entente were seriously intent on negotiation will only be known when they themselves have made some authentic pronouncement. In the spring and autumn of 1917 the actual state of affairs justified a relatively favourable view.

As a result of the Russian Revolution and the collapse of the Anglo-French spring offensive the military situation at that time had been transformed in our favour. The Entente could not count on speedily equalizing matters in a military sense, as the aid of America was still far away. The results of the U-boat operations had been greater than our enemies had suspected. Not that England was faced with starvation or capitulation. But the increasing losses in ships were certainly touching England's vital arteries.

This situation visibly affected the *moral* of the enemy nations.

Petersburg was energetically demanding the revision of the extravagant programme of war aims. Unrest among the French troops caused the Government to summon the "poilus" to hold out. After Lloyd George, as early as April, had uttered his well-known cry for "more ships," King George issued a

solemn appeal to his country to limit the consumption of food, and the House of Commons thought it necessary to debate the serious situation in a secret sitting. In June, after a short visit to England, even Ribot spoke emphatically of the dangers of the submarine campaign.

Our own situation forbade us to draw exaggerated inferences from these facts. Whatever happened, for 1917 we could not hope for a victory, either on land or at sea, which would mean a final decision. In addition, the gradual depletion of all our reserves of man-power and material continued remorselessly. The conviction that the U-boat campaign would not bring England to her knees penetrated even into those circles which had cradled themselves in such a belief. The growing pressure of the blockade combined with that process to lower the public *moral*. The material and moral resources of Austria-Hungary were vanishing even faster. As proof of this there was the celebrated report of Count Czernin to the Emperor Karl. Time was against us. We had to remember *that* when reckoning up not only our own position but the dispositions of the enemy. In the early summer of 1917 I was still in ignorance how far the Austrian peace overtures, which were being conducted through Prince Sixtus of Parma, had really gone.

The situation was in a state of flux. In agreement with the Vienna Cabinet I came to the conclusion that the Entente was very far from being compelled to make peace, but was certainly considering, on the assumption that an acceptable basis for negotiations would be found, whether a speedy peace of understanding was not preferable to final victory at some remote period and that no longer absolutely certain.

It appeared to me that the Entente began to test that assumption in the early summer of 1917. Among other facts there appeared to be confirmation of my view in the speech which Lloyd George delivered at Glasgow on June 29. In spite of its bellicose phrases I detected in it an invitation to

us to state our war aims precisely and thus prepare the ground for negotiation.

In the general situation I have described I saw not only the possibility of coming to negotiations but also the imperious necessity of resolutely exploiting the occasion. Our peace conditions must be kept within limits the acceptance of which could reasonably be expected of the Entente.

An absolutely indispensable condition was, of course, a declaration of renunciation with regard to Belgium. It was equally clear to me that an absolute negative on our part with regard to the French parts of Alsace-Lorraine would destroy all chance of negotiation from the outset. As I had assured myself as early as the previous year, the Kaiser was prepared in principle to consider concessions if they promised to lead to peace.

I stated the inferences I drew from my estimate of the situation in a conversation which I had with the papal nuncio, Monsignor Pacelli, on June 26.* At that moment I believed that the fact that the Vatican regarded this mission of the nuncio as hopeful was a further indication that an opportunity for negotiation was presenting itself. In our present state of knowledge it is still impossible to ascertain what was the connection.

Monsignor Pacelli, commissioned to deliver a letter from the Pope to His Majesty the Kaiser at General Headquarters, visited me in Berlin on June 26. In the letter the Pope, conveying his personal greetings to the Kaiser and his House, recalled how he had never ceased to implore the warring nations to lay down their murderous arms, and assured the Kaiser that he was still devoting all his efforts to bringing this monstrous disaster to a close.

* Main Headquarters knew as little about this step of the Imperial Chancellor as about his attitude to the peace efforts of the House of Parma-Bourbon (Chapter XI.). For further details about the Pope's peace step see No. 9 of the pamphlets of the "Tag" —*The Papal Peace Mediation*, by Martin Spahn; published by August Scherl, Berlin. The Pope's proposals of August 1 seemed to the General Staff to be a consequence of the Peace Resolution of July 19, 1917.

Taking up the thread of the argument in this letter, of which the nuncio allowed me to read a copy, I laid emphasis on Germany's readiness for peace, which had been announced to the whole world in our peace offer of December 12—a readiness which had been brought to nought by the firm determination of the Entente to continue the war.

The nuncio nevertheless insisted that it would in any case be of the greatest value if the Pope (whose anxious longing for world peace was well known to me), in return for an assurance of complete secrecy, was kept informed of Germany's views of war and peace so that at the psychological moment he would have a sure basis on which to use his influence in the cause of peace. As I said that I agreed the nuncio addressed to me a series of definite questions about our war aims and peace conditions. From the way in which the questions were put I gained the impression, which was confirmed subsequently, that I had to do with rather more than non-binding conversations on the possibilities of peace, and that the nuncio was carrying out a carefully defined commission. Taken in connection with my view of the general situation, which I have set out above and which seemed to me not to exclude the possibility of negotiations, I was convinced that by returning answers as definite as I could possibly make them to the questions put to me, the basis for peace negotiations could be created—negotiations into which England (which had certainly not yet been compelled to yield, but was seriously threatened by the U-boat campaign) and her allies would be willing to enter.

Acting from that standpoint I answered the individual questions of the nuncio to the effect that we were absolutely ready to limit our armaments if everyone else did so, and that we similarly agreed in principle to the establishment of courts of arbitration appointed to avert international conflicts. In reply to the question about our intentions with regard to

Belgium I said that we should restore its complete independence. Of course, it would be quite incompatible with that complete independence if Belgium fell under the political, military and financial domination of England and France, which Powers would then use their influence to injure Germany. Finally, in reply to the question what were Germany's plans with regard to Alsace-Lorraine, and whether the German Government were prepared to make territorial concessions to France, I answered that if France were ready for an understanding that question would not be an obstacle to peace. A way to agreement would be found under the form of certain rectifications of frontier in favour of each side.

On the eastern question I merely remarked that the chaotic condition of Russia seemed to me to negative the possibility of peace at the moment, as there was no government there in a position to negotiate.

At that time I had a definite impression—and the impression was confirmed by subsequent information—that the nuncio regarded my declarations as likely to advance the cause of peace.

On June 29 the nuncio was received by His Majesty the Kaiser at General Headquarters. In reply to the comprehensive representations which the nuncio, on behalf of the Pope, made on the subject of the Belgian deportations—a theme to which he had referred in Berlin also—the Kaiser promised to do his best, and in a long and comprehensive conversation, but without going into details, warmly and emphatically welcomed all activities on the part of the Pope which could bring peace nearer. His Majesty stated that he was convinced that now was the very time for the Catholic Church and the Pope to take action. Thanks to its international organization the Church was the most suitable body to spread the idea of peace in a war in which so many nations were involved, as it had the best technical machinery at its disposal. The other great international organization—Social

Democracy—had rightly recognized the importance of some such propaganda and had been the first to have the courage to place its organization at the service of peace. That would always be to the credit of Social Democracy, and if it were considered undesirable and fateful that it alone should have the credit the Catholic Church must seize the opportunity which the situation offered them. It was in the interests of the Catholic Church—he was bound to realize it, though he was a Protestant sovereign—that peace, or rather the possibility of a serious discussion about peace, should come, not through Social Democracy but through the Papacy.

Such was the course taken by the nuncio's mission. A few days later I was compelled to resign. I had thus no further influence on the development of events.

2.

THE PEACE PROPOSALS OF THE POPE OF AUGUST 1, HANDED IN AT BERLIN IN AUGUST, 1917

"To the leaders of the warring nations! Since the beginning of our pontificate, in the midst of the horrors which this fearful war has brought to Europe, we have held fast to these three aims: To maintain *complete impartiality* towards all parties to the strife, as befits the universal Father who loves all his children equally; secondly, to devote all our efforts to do all the good we could, without respect of persons or discriminating between nations and faiths, in accordance with the general commandment of love and in consideration of the spiritual office we hold, which office was entrusted to us by Christ; lastly, as our mission of peace also requires, to neglect nothing, so far as within us lies, which might aid in hastening the end of this disaster, and for that end we have striven to adjure the nations and their rulers to make far-reaching resolutions and clear declarations such as might lead

to a just and lasting peace. Not all that we have done with this high aim is known to the world. But everyone who has carefully followed our rule during the three tragic years which have just passed will easily appreciate that we have remained as faithful to our decision to preserve complete impartiality as to our strivings to give help, and that we have repeatedly implored the nations and their leaders to be friends and brothers once more. Towards the close of the first year of war we directed the most urgent warnings to the warring peoples and their leaders, and pointed the way to a lasting peace honourable for all. Unhappily our summons resounded but was not heard, and for two more years the war has raged pitilessly with all its horrors, indeed on an increasing scale of cruelty, and has extended from land to sea and even into the air. It has hurled destruction and death on unfortified towns, on peaceful villages and their innocent inhabitants. No one can even imagine how the sufferings of all would multiply and intensify if these three bloodstained years are followed by several months or perhaps years more. Is the civilized world to become nothing more than a heap of corpses? Shall Europe, so rich in glory and achievement, precipitate itself into the gulf and commit suicide, as if seized by universal madness?

"In this ghastly situation and in face of such serious dangers we once more issue our cry for peace and renew our urgent appeal to those to whom the destinies of the nations are entrusted. We have no kind of political aim of our own, and the ambitions and strivings of the States involved in the war have no influence upon us. We are inspired solely by the consciousness of the loftiest duty imposed upon the common Father of all believers, by the urgent prayers of our children who implore us to mediate in the cause of peace, and lastly by the call of humanity and reason. Yet at this moment we do not desire to confine ourselves to a general appeal such as circumstances have hitherto dictated; we wish to proceed to

more definite and feasible proposals. We invite the governments of the warring nations to agree upon the following principles, which seem fitted to form the basis of a just and lasting peace. We leave to those governments the duties of restricting or expanding them.

"First and foremost it must be accepted as a starting-point and foundation that the moral power of justice must take the place of the material power of force. From that we must come to a fair common agreement with regard to the *reduction of armaments*, which must be simultaneous and proportionate. The regulations and securities to be established in this matter must, as a general and normal standard, be such as are required and sufficient to maintain public order in each State. Further, a Court of Arbitration must take the place of armies. It will fulfil its appointed task of maintaining peace in accordance with agreed principles and employ its definite powers against every State which either refuses to submit international questions to the Court of Arbitration or accept its decrees. When once the supremacy of law has been established, all restrictions on communication between nations should cease, while the true *freedom of the seas*, which belong to all (*communité des mers*), will be secured by definite provisions which will remove many causes of conflict and also open new sources of well-being and progress.

"With regard to the question of compensation and indemnities we see no other means of solving this problem than an agreement in principle by all parties to renounce them utterly. The justification of such an agreement is to be found in the enormous benefits which a reduction of armaments will bring, and also in the fact that the prolongation of this wholesale slaughter for the sake of questions of money alone would seem to be incomprehensible. If there are contrary reasons and special claims in particular cases, these must be considered in accordance with justice and equity.

"A peaceful agreement, with the incalculable blessings it

will bring, is obviously impossible without the mutual restoration of the areas now occupied. Thus, Belgium must be completely evacuated by Germany and security be given for her integral political, military and economic independence of any and every Power. In the same way French territory must be evacuated and the German colonies given back by the other warring Powers.

"As regards territorial questions which are in dispute, as for instance those between Italy and Austria, Germany and France, we may hope that in consideration of the incalculable blessings accruing from a peace the permanency of which would be guaranteed by disarmament, the parties to the dispute would examine their claims in a spirit of conciliation, while, as we said in another place, the aspirations of the peoples would be judged by the standard of what is just and possible, and particular interests would be brought into harmony with the general well-being of the great human family.

"The aforesaid spirit of equity and justice must prevail in considering other territorial and political questions, notably those having reference to Armenia, the Balkan States and those countries which once formed the Kingdom of Poland, which has gained the sympathy of all nations not only by her noble historical traditions but also by her sufferings in the present war.

"Such are the most vital of the principles on which we think a future resuscitation of the league of nations should be based. They are of a nature to make the recurrence of similar wars impossible and to secure a corresponding solution of the economic question which is of such immense consequence to the future welfare of all the peoples involved in the war. In laying them before you—you, who in this fateful hour guide the destinies of the warring nations—we are inspired by the sweet hope that they will meet with your assent so that a speedy end will be put to this fearful conflict which seems more and more to be nothing but purposeless massacre. For

the rest, the whole world recognizes that the honour of arms has been maintained on both sides. Listen to our pleading, heed the fatherly appeal which we make to you in the name of the Heavenly Redeemer, the Prince of Peace. Think of your terrible responsibility to God and Humanity. Upon your decisions depend the peace and joy of families innumerable, the lives of thousands of young men—in a word, the happiness of the nations, to secure which is your urgent and highest duty. May God guide you to decisions which fulfil His Holy will. God grant that with the enthusiastic assent of your contemporaries, the coming generations will give you glorious praise for having restored peace to the world.

"United in prayer and penitence with all pious souls who are longing for peace I entreat the Holy Spirit to bring you enlightenment and wisdom.

"Given at the Vatican,
"August 1, 1917."

3.

Letter of the Nuncio Pacelli to the Imperial Chancellor, Dr. Michaelis.

"Munich,
"August 30, 1917.

"Your Excellency,

"I have the high honour of giving Your Excellency the enclosed copy of a telegram (the English reply.—The Author) which has been handed to His Eminence the Cardinal Secretary of State by His Excellency the Ambassador of His Majesty the King of England to the Papal See. The French Government associates itself with the point of view set out in the telegram.

"His Eminence is extremely desirous that the efforts to reach a just and lasting peace should be effectively continued, efforts which the Imperial Government showed such an anxious disposition to assist. His Eminence has therefore

instructed me to draw your Excellency's special attention to the point which concerns Belgium and to secure (1) a definite declaration as to the intentions of the Imperial Government with regard to the complete independence of Belgium and the compensation to be made to her for the damage done by the war; (2) equally definite guarantees for her political, economic and military independence which Germany demands. If this declaration is satisfactory, His Eminence thinks that an important step will have been taken towards the further development of the negotiations. The ambassador of Great Britain has already informed his Royal Government that the Holy See would reply to the communications in the telegram in question as soon as it had received the answer of the Imperial Government through me.

"May I be permitted to express my firm conviction that Your Excellency, whose entry into the highest office appeared to be a happy coincidence with the noble papal suggestions and who has shown your sympathy with this work of peace, will earn the undying gratitude of the Fatherland and the whole of mankind if the progress of the peace negotiations is facilitated by a conciliatory answer.

"In such hopes, etc.,

(Signed) "EUGEN PACELLI,

"Archbishop of Sardi,

"Apostolic Nuncio."

This document is the so-called English peace feeler. No further details were given to Main Headquarters, even by Dr. Michaelis. On September 11 a Crown Council was summoned in Berlin. The Field-Marshal and I were summoned to take part.

4.

DECLARATION OF THE EX-IMPERIAL CHANCELLOR, DR. MICHAELIS, ON JULY 26, 1919

"The official documents on the affair of the nuncio Pacelli's letter of August 30 to me are not available. Speaking from my personal recollection I have the following remarks to make about the handling of the so-called English "peace feeler":

"The document was laid before me at the beginning of September. I discussed it with the Secretaries of State and the Ministers and went to meet the Kaiser, who, if I remember rightly, was returning from a visit to the front, on September 9 in order to confer with him.

"I requested the Kaiser to hold a Crown Council in the presence of the chiefs of the army and navy. The Crown Council was held at Bellevue Castle on September 11. The result of the conference was summarized in the following form, written and signed by the Kaiser in his own hand:

"'The annexation of Belgium would be a mistake. Belgium can be restored. The Flemish coast is certainly very important and Zeebrugge cannot be allowed to fall into English hands. But the Belgian coast by itself cannot be kept. There must be a close economic association of Belgium with Germany. Belgium herself has the greatest interest in that.'

"With regard to the further examination of the peace feeler it was arranged between Secretary of State von Kühlmann and myself that we should make soundings through some particularly well-qualified person to find out whether the English really had any intention of abandoning their previous programme of excessive war aims, a programme which had definitely come to our knowledge, and treating with us on an acceptable *via media*. The papal nuncio's letter contained no convincing proofs on this matter. We were faced by the danger that what we were dealing with was an attempt to force Germany to a conciliatory declaration while maintaining their own extravagant claims and thereby removing the negotiation landmarks to our disadvantage.

"The choice of the intermediary fell upon a neutral diplomatist,* a personal friend of Secretary of State von Kühlmann, and a man who seemed to have special qualifications to make the soundings required. He was informed of Germany's attitude as defined at the Crown Council referred to, and his mission was set out as follows:

"A condition precedent to negotiation with England is her recognition:

(a) That our frontiers shall remain intact,
(b) That our colonies be restored,
(c) That no indemnities be demanded,
(d) That all idea of an economic war be abandoned.

"In agreement with His Excellency von Kühlmann I regarded this as the right course, because the weaving of these first peace threads seemed possible only if absolute secrecy was preserved.

"If we negotiated through the papal curia we should not have had that security. Even at the time I received the nuncio's letter it appeared that Erzberger (then a deputy) knew before I did that the letter was coming. An indiscretion by him must be guarded against at any cost. For that reason an attitude of reserve must be adopted towards the nuncio, and after the lapse of a certain time a fairly general answer was returned to him.

"The further course of the negotiations showed that every indiscretion was pregnant with the greatest dangers for their chances. The conference at the Crown Council and its aims did not remain a secret. The war parties in Germany, England and France made good use of the opportunity, and the result was that the representatives of the English Government publicly denied that any offer of peace had been made on the part of the English. I eagerly seized on the idea of securing peace by making far-reaching concessions with regard to Belgium,

* The gentleman in question was the Spanish ambassador in Brussels, the Marquis of Villalobar. [The Author.]

and I carried my point so that ruling circles came round to my point of view with regard to this question. I endeavoured to find the best way for following up the first approaches. If the plan broke down it was because our enemies did not desire it. (Signed) "MICHAELIS.

"Saarow,
"July 26, 1919."

5.

THE FIRST QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL.

G.H.Q.,
14/9/1917.

MY SUMMARY IN THE CROWN COUNCIL, REPEATED IN THE FOLLOWING MEMORANDUM*

At the conferences in Berlin our position and that of our enemies has been under discussion. I regard it as my duty to return once more to this subject and set down in writing the line of reasoning I adopted. I have extended it here with regard to Longwy and Briey, agriculture and maritime trade.

* In this I took the same standpoint as had been adopted in December, 1916, in dealing with the Imperial Chancellor, von Bethmann-Hollweg.

1. Recognition of the Kingdom of Poland.
2. Annexation of parts of Courland and Lithuania in such a way that, taking in the Kingdom of Poland, we should have a good north to south strategic frontier against Russia.
3. Commercial treaty with Russia, or economic privileges, as the case may be.
4. Guarantees in Belgium, which should be secured, if possible, by negotiation with King Albert. If this were not realized on an adequate scale, the annexation of Liége with corresponding strips of territory.
5. Evacuation of the occupied area in France, with the exception of Briey and Longwy, in return for the evacuation by the French of the occupied parts of Alsace-Lorraine, strategic rectifications of frontier for us in Alsace-Lorraine and an indemnity or compensation.
6. Return of the colonies, with the exception of Kiaochau, the Carolines and Marianes, a general colonial agreement, the acquisition of the whole or part of the Congo.
7. Compensation for Germans living abroad and German property in foreign countries, so far as it has suffered damage.
8. Incorporation of Luxemburg in the German Empire.

The conditions for Austria-Hungary were as follows:

1. Integrity of the Monarchy.
2. Slight improvements in the frontier against Russia.
3. Strategic rectifications of frontier against Rumania (Iron Gate, and eventually the Bistrica Valley).
4. Restoration of the Kingdom of Serbia, though it must surrender the area

Judging by the reports of the departmental representatives our home situation is difficult in respect of fodder and coal; in the latter case, unfortunately, omissions in earlier months are partly responsible. Our financial system is extremely strained. Thanks to the Reichstag majority our domestic situation has become very unsatisfactory. The labour, and therefore the recruiting, questions have become even more difficult. Yet I think that these internal difficulties may be overcome by the firm control of the present Government. It is quite possible.

As I will now explain in greater detail Austria-Hungary is firmly bound to us for the next few months. Even Bulgaria will be more conciliatory when the French have won local successes west of Lake Ochrida. We are always sure of the Turks. I need say nothing more to show that our military position is secure and that the U-boat campaign is producing its effect.

On the other hand the position of the Entente is considerably worse.

Russia is tending ever more obviously towards internal dis-

promised to Bulgaria, the Albanian portions to Albania, the Matschwa from Belgrade. With a view to satisfying Bulgaria, Baron Burian will eventually concede still more territory to that country. The rest of restored Serbia shall be joined in a close economic association with Austria.

5. Restoration of the Kingdom of Montenegro, which will surrender certain areas to Austria-Hungary and Albania.

6. Independence of Albania under Austro-Hungarian protectorate.

7. Strategic rectifications of frontier against Italy. (Certain barren and mountainous districts.)

For the agreements in December, 1916, and my point of view in September, 1917, I took my stand on the result of the sitting of the Reichstag on April 5, 1916.

The Imperial Chancellor said:

"After the war Belgium will not be what she was before the war. . . . We must have real guarantees that Belgium will not become an Anglo-French vassal state, and will not be converted into a military and economic bulwark against Germany."

At the same sitting Deputy Spahn said:

"The war must end in some tangible result. The Imperial Chancellor has now shown us the tangible result in the East. For the West he has spoken with greater caution. Belgium, an *avulsum imperii*, must not remain England's bulwark. *The necessary result of that is that she must be in our power from the political, military and economic point of view.* (Hear, hear.) But this would not touch the political organization of the country. The really final terms of peace might settle that. We pursue—and I repeat this after the Imperial Chancellor—no war of conquest. *But we must adjust our frontiers in accordance with our own interests.*

solution. She thus progressively falls out as an effective enemy. Her internal conditions must undoubtedly produce a food and fuel crisis in the winter. This situation will react on Rumania. Affairs in the East have taken a turn which is very favourable for us. The other Entente Powers can no longer fully rely on Russia and Rumania. Our alliance has nothing similar to show.

Italy is apparently reckoning on a victory in the twelfth Isonzo battle. It will be denied her. The internal situation will then tend to precipitate a crisis. The coal shortage must be very great.

It is not to be believed that the new ministry in France will be permanently more bellicose than its predecessor. We may anticipate the contrary. France, too, is faced with a coal crisis.

All recent reports from England agree that the U-boat campaign is effective, the food situation is serious, and the English Government has to contend with great social difficulties. The pressure for peace is becoming stronger. I need go no further into this matter. If England took really serious steps it would be a sign that she no longer believed she could win. It is no long step from that to the conviction that she might lose.

Since Russia's downfall America has become the hope of the Entente. Although she is not to be under-estimated, she must not be over-estimated. At the moment England seems to be afraid that the leadership of the Entente will pass to America.

We need not stop to discuss what are her relations with Italy and her other allies, but it is certain that there is great friction between the members of the Entente.

So far the year 1917 has not brought the Entente great military successes. England has only won Mesopotamia. The great victories on land and at sea (U-boats) have been on our side.

I draw the following conclusions:

Our military situation is more favourable than that of the Entente. Our alliance is firmer. Our internal difficulties are less than those of the Entente.

Yet, notwithstanding all this, I am of opinion that it is desirable that we should try to get a peace before the winter sets in, so long as it brings us those essentials which we need to secure our economic position hereafter and gives us an economic and military position which allows us to face another war of defence without anxiety.

The sources of our economic and military powers of resistance are to be found—apart from the army and navy—in our agriculture, our mineral wealth and our highly developed industry.

Without Rumania and the other occupied areas, we should have been in a critical position with regard to food. Even with Rumania it has been serious enough. It would become still more acute if, as we must anticipate later, we had to feed Belgium. At the moment we are quite unable to do so. We must, therefore, have an increase of territory. That territory can only be found in Courland and Lithuania, which offer good agricultural opportunities. In view of the attitude of Poland, and for military reasons, we must fix the frontier of Lithuania to the south of Grodno and somewhat enlarge East and West Prussia. Only thus shall we protect Prussia. Moreover, from a military point of view the frontier is too unfavourable at various points in the province of Posen.

Whether we shall attract the other Baltic provinces through Courland must be left to subsequent political developments.

I will only touch upon the question as to the favourable influence an improvement in the food situation would have on our relations with the neutral States. Corn and potatoes are power, just like coal and iron.

Our mineral wealth and our industries are located as unfavourably as possible—on the frontiers of the Empire.

The Government and the Reichstag realized the difficult situation of the Upper Silesian coal basin even before the war and increased and strengthened the fortresses there. That by itself is not enough. We must protect Upper Silesia by annexing further areas also. This would be facilitated by liquidating the enemy-owned mines there and transferring them into German possession.

In the west we have the two great centres of the Lorraine–Luxemburg ore fields with the Saar basin and the lower Rhenish–Westphalian industrial area which tends to extend more and more along the Belgian and Dutch frontiers. These areas have not been in danger during this war, owing to the fact that we got the start of the Entente in our strategic deployment. Besides, the importance of the industrial areas was certainly not fully realized at the beginning of the war. But there is no doubt now—and we must take the fact into account—that our enemies will do everything they can to injure us in these areas. If they should succeed we should not be in a position to conduct a war of defence. We should also be in a hopeless position economically. There is no need to discuss the consequences to our domestic situation.

The unconditional protection of these two areas is a matter of life and death for us. We must get everything we possibly can and which our position justifies. If we do not do so, our position will always be a subject of the greatest anxiety to us, and it would be better to go on fighting and not even think of peace. We must be quite clear that what we fail to get will have to be made good in peace by heavy military expenditure (aerial defences, the maintenance of an aerial force, a formidable system of frontier defences), so far as it can be made good.

The Lorraine iron basin demands a protective belt on the west. The wider it is, the easier will it be to secure that protection. If we kept the frontiers we had before the war

it would mean that every political excitement would affect the mines and the great body of labour employed there. As soon as hostilities began the works would be paralysed and exposed to destruction. Moreover, there are mines in the strips of territory we should aim at securing. The annexation of this area would also enable us to be more economical with our own ore. As the German production of ore is unfortunately somewhat limited, this point is not immaterial. But first and foremost the areas we must secure will give us a guarantee that the mines now in German possession will work even in war if they have direct military protection.

It is obvious that the region will still be exposed to great danger from artillery and aviators and will make strong defensive measures necessary, as we cannot advance our frontiers there to the Meuse.

All the more essential is it that the lower Rhenish–Westphalian area should be made inviolable. What the Flemish coast is to England from the point of view of air attacks on that country, the line of the Meuse at Liége is for the industrial area, though in an even higher degree. We must control the region on both sides of the Meuse and south as far as St. Vith. Hitherto, the only method of securing this aim has seemed to me the incorporation of the area in the German Empire. I must leave the question whether there is any other method to others. I have not yet succeeded in finding one.†

* Captain von Gossler of the General Staff received the following commission:

"The German-Lorraine ore basin is directly on the old frontier and exposed to destruction immediately on the outbreak of war. You must find a frontier which is tactically suitable for defence in accordance with the principles of modern fortification. The frontier must be advanced as little as possible but take such a course that the German mines are not exposed to bombardment by hostile *field* artillery from the far side of the frontier."

Captain von Gossler notes:

"In conformity with these instructions I have discovered a position suitable to the ground. The frontier runs generally 6 to 8 kilometres on the far side of the old frontier; it was advanced to 10 to 12 kilometres at one point only."

† An agreement or form such as France has adopted in Saarbrücken was also considered.

The possession of the Meuse line by itself is not enough to give the industrial area the security it requires. We must keep an Anglo-Franco-Belgian army even further away. That can only be secured by binding Belgium so closely to us economically that she will seek political union also. The economic association will not be realized without strong military pressure—a considerable period of occupation—and without our possessing Liége. The neutrality of Belgium is a phantom on which no practical reliance can be placed.

We should only be *absolutely* safe, especially if the Dover-Calais tunnel scheme materialized, if we were in military occupation of the whole of Belgium and held the coast of Flanders. In spite of all England's difficulties, that cannot at the moment be achieved.

The question is whether we ought to continue the war until we reach that goal. In my opinion it is our duty to do so if England retains any territory in France (Calais). If she does not do so the occupation of the Flemish coast would be no reason for us to continue the war through the winter.

We must look for other methods of producing those effects on England at which we aimed with our occupation of the Flemish coast. I consider that this is possible if Belgium is closely associated with the German Empire economically, divided into Walloon and Flemish areas, takes over her own defence against France and England in course of time, and has her own army and navy after the period of occupation comes to an end.

The association of Belgium with Germany will have as a result that Holland, if she pursues her obvious interests, will be attracted to us, especially if her colonial possessions are guaranteed by a Japan which is allied to us. In that way we shall reach another part of the coast of the continent which faces England, and realize the aim for which the navy is even now striving, justly recognizing its importance. We shall have a position with regard to England which will enable us

to keep our trade going in the next war. That is the third great object which we must always keep in mind.

To this aspect of affairs belong, besides Russia, *points d'appui* overseas in South America, a colonial empire in Africa and naval stations in or outside the colonial empire. At the very moment when we are abandoning the Flemish coast the navy has a special claim by way of compensation to *points d'appui*—the Imperial Chancellor has himself expressly said so—which will enable it in the next war to keep the way to the world seas open to Germany and thereby secure her imports from abroad. The greater our failure to achieve this aim, the larger must be the stocks of raw material which we shall have to accumulate, getting no return, in Germany.

I need only mention that a favourable commercial treaty with a Denmark closely associated with us would increase our maritime strength and freedom of trade enormously.

(Signed) LUDENDORFF.

6.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE IMPERIAL CHANCELLOR AND THE FIELD-MARSHAL

The ImperialChancellor to the Field-Marshal (not in my possession; communicated by the Minister-President Bauer [The Author]).

"'After the conclusion of yesterday's conference under His Majesty's presidency, I felt myself compelled to give you and General Ludendorff my thanks for having supported me in so far-sighted a manner, and by no means from the purely military standpoint alone, in keeping our war aims within bounds in expectation of soon entering into negotiations, either in the autumn or spring.

"'I take it that the demands of Main Headquarters, demands on which you think there should be no weakening, mean that you both claim Liége and a protective belt for the safety of our western industrial area; that you both hope that as a result of the close economic association of Belgium with

Germany a situation will arise which, on purely egotistical, economic grounds, will make it impossible for her to have military differences with us, so that when everything has been done in Belgium which can be demanded by us for the purpose of safeguarding the economic bond—and of course that will take several years from the time of the first negotiations—military safeguards can be allowed to lapse. Liége and so forth would therefore be demanded as a security for a limited period only.

"'I now want to make Your Excellency an urgent request that when the expected visitors reach Headquarters, especially the visitors who belong to the annexationist school (for instance, I myself had to recommend Count Westarp to take a trip to Austria !) and who, knowing little about events among our allies, are thus inclined to regard a peace on the principles indicated with regard to Belgium as a bad one, you will inform them of your views so that extreme ambitions may be checked. We must show them what the enemy's intentions were with regard to us and what we have actually obtained—instead of destruction and dismemberment, intact frontiers in the west and a certain prospect of using the raw material in the occupied areas; commercial and transport facilities by rail and water; preferential treatment in the port of Antwerp; an influence over the Germanophile Flemish population; our neighbours themselves to bear the cost of the damage we have inflicted upon them; the destruction of English influence on the coasts of Flanders and northern France, and the demand for the return of our colonies as an object of compromise.'

"The next part up to the end was not read by Minister-President Bauer in his speech of July 28, 1919. The result was that the sense of the answer was completely distorted."

"'In addition there is the fact that we gain enormously in power and influence in the East in political, economic and military matters.

"'Does this look like a "starvation" or "renunciation" peace? Who would dare to make another attack upon Germany, who has maintained herself victoriously on hostile soil three and four years against an immense superiority of numbers, and has only just given incomparable proof of her might in the furthest East?

"'No, our die-hards must possess their souls in peace! If we can bring peace to our poor, tormented people and the world on the lines set forth above, we should do so and not fight even a month longer for the sake of some naval station, however valuable. Please help in the work of enlightenment!'"

"I maintain that if the whole of my letter had been read out the representatives of the Government would not have succeeded, even for a moment, in obtaining a certain measure of success with some of their electors in reproaching me for having irresponsibly rejected an 'offer of peace.'

(Signed) "MICHAELIS."

THE REPLY OF THE FIELD-MARSHAL ON SEPTEMBER 15, 1917

As read out on July 28, 1919. The original is not in my possession. I do not know whether in this case also intentional alterations were made. [The Author.]

"In accordance with Your Excellency's wish I will help in enlightening leading men on our intentions with regard to Belgium, intentions on which agreement has been reached among the authorities in anticipation of peace being reached this year. I do not conceal from myself that in the navy and many patriotic circles the evacuation of the Belgian coast will be regarded as a heavy blow, which will only become tolerable when the compensations materialize which Your Excellency also conceded to the navy. In agreement with General Ludendorff I think that the compensation should take the form of *points d'appui* within and without our colonial empire. I must add two points. The economic

union of Belgium with Germany will not be realized without pressure upon that country, even after the conclusion of peace. An occupation of several years will serve the purpose, and in any case this would be necessary on military grounds while England and America are evacuating France. The German holding of Liége must continue after the occupation, even if it lasts several years. Its main purpose is the direct military protection of the lower Rhenish–Westphalian industrial area. It is only when we are in occupation of Liége, and are and remain undisputed masters of the situation, that we can take the necessary military and administrative measures. I am therefore bound to think that we could not leave Liége within any period that is ascertainable or could be fixed in the treaty. (Signed) "VON HINDENBURG."

7.

THE GERMAN REPLY TO THE PAPAL NOTE OF SEPTEMBER 19, 1917*

"HERR CARDINAL,

"Your Eminence has been good enough to hand the Kaiser and King, my gracious master, a letter of the 2nd inst. giving the views of His Holiness the Pope, in which His Holiness, filled with grief at the ravages of the world war, directs an urgent appeal to the rulers of the States at war.

"His Majesty the Kaiser and King has been pleased to inform me of Your Eminence's letter, and commissions me to reply to it.

"For a considerable time His Majesty has been following with deep regard and sincere gratitude the efforts of His Holiness to relieve the sufferings caused by the war and hasten the end of hostilities, efforts which have been dictated by a spirit of true impartiality. In the latest step of His Holiness the Kaiser sees a further proof of his noble and

* Communicated by the Imperial Chancellor, Dr. Michaelis, to the Supreme Command before his resignation.

humane sympathies, and cherishes an intense desire that the papal appeal will be attended by success, to the joy of the whole world.

"The efforts of Pope Benedict XV. to bring about an understanding between the nations may rely on a particularly sympathetic reception and firm support from His Majesty, because the Kaiser, since his reign began, has ever regarded it as his first and most sacred duty to preserve the blessings of peace for the German nation and the world. In the first speech from the throne at the opening of the German Reichstag on June 25, 1888, the Kaiser vowed that his affection for the German army and his relations with it should never lead him into attempts to deprive the nation of the benefits of peace unless war became an unavoidable necessity as the result of an attack on the Empire or its allies. The German army exists to keep the peace, he said, and if the peace is broken it will be able to fight for it with honour. In twenty-six years of a reign rich in blessings the Kaiser, disregarding all incitements and provocations, has translated into deeds the vow that he then took. Even in the crisis which led to the present war His Majesty devoted all his efforts up to the last moment to avert the conflict by peaceful means. After the war had broken out, against his will and wishes, the Kaiser and his high allies were the first to make a solemn announcement of their readiness to enter into negotiations for peace.

"The German nation stands behind His Majesty in his practical desire for peace. Germany seeks the untrammelled development of her moral and material possessions within her frontiers, and beyond them open competition with other nations, enjoying equal respect and rights. The free play of forces competing peacefully together in the world has led to the highest development of the noblest human qualities. A lamentable succession of events suddenly interrupted the hopeful process in the year 1914 and transformed Europe into a bloody battle-ground.

"As befits the importance which attaches to the pronouncement of His Holiness, the Imperial Government has not failed to give the suggestions therein made its serious and conscientious consideration. The special steps it has taken, in close conjunction with the representatives of the German people, to discuss and draw up the replies to the questions which have been addressed to it are a proof that it cherishes a heartfelt desire to fulfil the wishes of His Holiness and the peace proclamation of the Reichstag on July 19 last and find a fitting basis for a just and lasting peace.

"The Imperial Government greets with particular sympathy the dominant thought of the appeal for peace, where His Holiness clearly states his conviction that in future the moral power of Right must replace the material power of force. We, too, are thoroughly persuaded that the sick body of human society can only be cured by strengthening the moral power of Right. In His Holiness's view the logical consequence of that is a mutual reduction of the armaments of all nations and the establishment of compulsory arbitration for international disputes. We share the opinion of His Holiness that definite regulations and guarantees for a simultaneous and general limitation of armaments on land, at sea and in the air, combined with the true freedom and community of the High Seas, are the matters in the negotiation of which that new spirit, which in future is to inspire relations between the States, must find blessed expression. We must, then, devote ourselves to the problem of settling international disputes, not by the arbitrament of arms but by peaceful methods, especially that of an arbitration court, the pacific influence of which we, like His Holiness, fully recognize. The Imperial Government will lend its aid to any proposal which is compatible with the vital interests of the German Empire and nation. Through her geographical position and economic needs Germany is dependent upon peaceful intercourse with her neighbours and distant countries.

No nation has better reason than Germany to hope that a more conciliatory and brotherly spirit between the nations will replace this universal hatred and strife.

"When the nations are guided by that spirit and have realized, to their own great good, that the unifying elements in their relations are to be brought out rather than the discordant, they will succeed in settling even their present quarrels in such a way that every nation will enjoy the conditions of a prosperous existence, and thus a recurrence of the great world catastrophe would appear to be impossible.

"On these bases only can a lasting peace be established, a peace which will favour the intellectual *rapprochement* and economic revival of human society.

"This serious and genuine conviction encourages us to feel confident that our opponents also may see in the suggestions put forward by His Holiness a suitable basis on which to enter into negotiations for a future peace, under conditions such as equity and the situation of Europe dictate.

(Signed) "THE IMPERIAL CHANCELLOR.

"Herr Kardinal Gasparri,
Secretary of State to
His Holiness Pope Benedict XV.,
Rome."

8.

REPLY OF THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT TO THE NUNCIO PACELLI *

"Berlin,
"September 24, 1917.

"I have the honour of having received Your Excellency's kind letter of the 30th ult., and beg you to accept the expression of my sincere thanks for the interesting news you have been good enough to communicate.

* I have known of this only quite recently. [The Author.]

"I assume from Your Excellency's letter that the Cardinal Secretary of State will effectively persevere in his efforts to bring about a speedy, just and lasting peace. It is an immense satisfaction to me to know this, as the wishes of the Imperial Government are in entire harmony with those efforts.

"Your Excellency will permit me to make the following remarks with reference to the copy you were good enough to send me of a telegram of the Royal British Government to its Envoy to the Papal See.

"The Imperial Government associates itself with the view that a definite statement of war aims is the path by which unity of view in certain circumstances between the contending parties is to be reached. For it is just the precise definition of the conditions put forward by each side which will make it possible to see whether the existing causes of conflict can be removed by an examination in a spirit of reasonable forbearance. A certain order and succession will no doubt have to be agreed upon for the discussion of the points to be examined. In our view those questions which relate to Belgium will have to be considered first of all.

"However, all attempts at an understanding—and this is a point on which I must lay particular stress before going into details—are condemned to futility beforehand if the exchange of views is not governed by that spirit of objectivity and respect for the standpoint of the other side of which His Holiness the Pope has given such a shining example during the whole of this fearful war.

"Generally speaking, our opponents have revealed a tendency to cast the blame for the war on the Central Powers alone, and to speak of them in a tone as if they were judges and a criminal was appearing before them. We have noticed with genuine regret that even in the telegram of the Royal Government of Great Britain which has been sent me by Your Excellency there are expressions which correspond to that description. And yet, according to reports we have

received, many expressions of leading English statesmen embody more objective views which we could accept and which might correspond to the judgment which History will pronounce on the origin of this mighty struggle.

"Such a spirit of calm reflection and conciliation can alone create an atmosphere favourable to a successful exchange of views. It would be incompatible with the justified pride of the German nation to meet our enemies for the discussion of the possibilities and conditions of peace on the ground of any other views or feelings.

"I have allowed myself to place particular emphasis on this point, not because I wish to revive old controversies which have agitated the nations for more than three years, and thus place obstacles in the path of peace, but because I am trying to make smooth that path by carefully defining those moral presumptions without which all our efforts, however well-meant, must be doomed to failure.

"If our present enemies claim that they have stated their war aims in their reply to the note of President Wilson, it is not superfluous to draw attention to the fact that the war aims there put forward as a basis for an exchange of views cannot even be considered, as their starting-point is an assumption—the complete overthrow of Germany and her allies—which will never materialize, thanks to the constancy of the German nation. If Germany published or communicated to her present opponents war aims which started from the contrary presumption—the complete defeat of her enemies—I think it would injure, and not promote, the cause of peace. For the differences between the demands of the two sides would be so great that even with the best intentions agreement could hardly be considered possible. If we are to reach the stage of conversations on the possibility of peace at the present moment, they could only start from a fresh basis—that at the present time neither of the two sides is conquered, and that nothing, either on the moral or political side, can be

demanded from either party which would be intolerable to a proud nation, even if it were defeated.

"If at the present juncture we are not yet in a position to meet Your Excellency's wishes and issue a definite declaration about the intentions of the Imperial Government with regard to Belgium and the guarantees we ourselves desire, it is certainly not because the Imperial Government is averse in principle to making such a declaration, under-estimates its decisive importance to the question of peace or thinks that its intentions and what it regards as indispensable guarantees are a hopeless obstacle to peace. No, the reason is simply that it thinks that certain conditions which form an essential preliminary to the issue of such a declaration have not yet been sufficiently defined.

"The Imperial Government will strive to make this matter clear and it hopes—if circumstances favour its purpose—to be in a position at no distant date to give Your Excellency further details about its intentions and essential demands, especially with reference to Belgium.

"I must here give expression to the hope which inspires us that complete success may crown the great efforts of His Holiness the Pope to restore the blessings of peace to the nations after all the horrors of this unprecedented war.

"With the highest respect, etc.,

(Signed) "MICHAELIS.

"His Excellency the Apostolic Nuncio,
Archbishop of Sardi, Mgr. Eugen Pacelli,
Munich."

The Imperial Government—Bauer, the Minister-President, and Erzberger, the Finance Minister—blame the Imperial Chancellor, Dr. Michaelis, and the Supreme Command, as well as Minister of State Dr. Helfferich, for having hindered the conclusion of peace with the Entente by refusing to make a declaration about Belgium.

9.

JOINT DECLARATION OF THE IMPERIAL CHANCELLOR, DR. MICHAELIS, FIELD-MARSHAL VON HINDENBURG, GENERAL LUDENDORFF AND SECRETARY OF STATE DR. HELFFERICH ON AUGUST 7, 1919

The former Imperial Chancellor sends us* the following account of events, in confirmation and amplification of his previous declaration of July 26, 1919, after conferring with the former representatives of the Supreme Command and Minister of State Dr. Helfferich, and in association with them.

"On September 5, 1917, the letter of the Apostolic Nuncio in Munich to the Imperial Chancellor reached Berlin, a letter which asked the Imperial Government for a declaration of its intentions with regard to Belgium on the faith of a communication of the British Government to the British Envoy at the Vatican, a copy of which was enclosed. It also expressed the conviction of the Cardinal Secretary of State that a satisfactory declaration would mean an important step towards the further development of negotiations.

"In agreement with the then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Herr von Kühlmann, with whom I immediately discussed the Nuncio's letter in detail, I was of opinion that in view of the accompanying commentary of the Cardinal Secretary of State there was a decided possibility of an English peace feeler. On the other hand, we considered that the text of the communication of the Foreign Office to the British Envoy at the Vatican did not reveal the seriousness of the English intention to enter into negotiations with us upon an acceptable basis with the certainty required for the declaration about Belgium which was desired of us. For that reason I agreed with Herr von Kühlmann that the English Government should first be sounded about its readiness through the medium of a neutral diplomatist selected by him.

* The Press. [The Author.]

"To secure the Government the necessary powers for this step I considered that a decision of the Emperor, binding on all the authorities, was required. I obtained that decision at a Crown Council held in Bellevue Castle, Berlin, on September 11, 1917.

"I shared the view of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that the step of the Munich nuncio required the most cautious and discreet handling. The ministers and Secretaries of State, as well as Main Headquarters and the Naval Staff, were therefore told merely that certain approaches had been made by a neutral; that these approaches seemed to suggest an English peace feeler, and that the restoration of the territorial integrity and the sovereignty of Belgium was indicated as a condition precedent to the adoption of this course. On the other hand, neither at the Crown Council nor in the conferences held before and after it was any information given as to how the matter had come to the notice of the political head, nor as to the method by which it was to be followed up.

"At the Crown Council on September 11, with the support of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, I asked for His Majesty's authority to declare, if the case arose, that Germany was prepared to restore the territorial integrity and the sovereignty of Belgium. After the Kaiser had invited the representatives of the army and navy to give their views on the military and naval aspects of the problem to be decided, the Chief of the Naval Staff said that the coast of Flanders must remain in German hands. The representatives of the Supreme Command put forward the military view, which seemed to be that military control of Liége and district was desirable in view of the exposed position of the Rhenish–Westphalian industrial area, the economic products of which were indispensable for military operations, as well as the subsequent defence of the Empire. The Kaiser decided in favour of my request, with the reservation of a fresh examination of the

question if our renunciation of Belgium did not bring peace by the end of the year and thus spare us another winter campaign.

"On this basis I commissioned the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to instruct his neutral confidant. At my suggestion the neutral intermediary was further informed that we considered the following terms as conditions precedent to negotiations with England: the integrity of our pre-war territorial possessions, including the Colonies, the abandonment of claims to an indemnity and the idea of an economic war after the war.

"The correspondence of September 12 and 15, 1917, between Field-Marshal von Hindenburg and me, which has been published by the Imperial Minister-President Bauer (in the official edition my letter has been shorn of its last sentences, which are so important for a proper understanding !), makes no change in the matter. In the military, as well as economic, stipulations that were put forward with regard to Belgium it was not a case of reservations which were to be made in dealing with England, but rather of goals at which we must aim in the negotiations with Belgium herself. The memorandum of September 14 of General Ludendorff, which was enclosed in the Field-Marshal's letter, obviously was only intended to serve the purpose of a written record of the arguments he brought forward at the Crown Council. This appears clearly from its opening words.

"The action of the neutral intermediary was not in any way hampered or obstructed by these matters. But it none the less led to a negative result, in the long run. It appeared that the British Government had no sort of inclination to enter into peace negotiations on the basis which had been defined by the German political chief, a basis which corresponded fundamentally to the Reichstag resolution of July 19, 1917. It was plain that the Cardinal Secretary of State and the Apostolic Nuncio in Munich had attached an importance to

the communication of the Foreign Office to the British Minister to the Vatican which the facts did not warrant.

"I deny the charges which have been made against me, and say that while I held the office of Chancellor I neglected *nothing* which could have led to peace if England had really been ready to negotiate. I equally repudiate the charges which have been made against Field-Marshal von Hindenburg, General Ludendorff and Dr. Helfferich, the Imperial Chancellor's deputy at that time. These gentlemen were one and all in no way concerned in the diplomatic action. They did nothing to cross or hamper in any way the action of the political heads.

"In common with these gentlemen I give it as my conviction that the account given above would be confirmed by the statements of the former Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, von Kühlmann. I believe this statement of fact to be necessary—as do the gentlemen in question—as it is desirable to allay the excitement among a large part of the German nation which has been roused by the account of the Imperial Minister of Finance, an account which is not in accordance with the facts.

(Signed) "MICHAELIS."

"The undersigned confirm that the description given above is in accordance with the actual facts,* so far as the matters in issue took place with their co-operation and knowledge.

(Signed) "VON HINDENBURG."
"LUDENDORFF."
"HELFFERICH."

* A few days after the Crown Council the Imperial Chancellor, at a conference with his deputy, Dr. Helfferich, and Secretary of State von Kühlmann (Colonel von Haeften, Director Deutelmoser and a representative of the War Press Office were also present), suggested that public opinion at home and at the front should be prepared for a marked reduction of the war aims with regard to Belgium which were popular in many circles. For reasons unknown, Secretary of State von Kühlmann opposed the idea. On September 20, Colonel von Haeften, who had no knowledge of the step taken by the nuncio Pacelli, had a conference with Secretary of State von Kühlmann, in which he invited him, at the suggestion of Deputy Conrad Haussmann, to make a public declaration with regard to Belgium. The Secretary of State declined. Colonel von Haeften reported accordingly to Main Headquarters. [The Author.]

10.

ENEMY VIEWS

France.

The "Temps" of July 29, 1919.

The Allies and the Holy See in 1917.

M. Ribot's Declaration.

"We have had the honour of being received by M. Ribot, who was President of the Council and Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time when the incident referred to by Herr Erzberger took place. M. Ribot, while explaining that he must make certain reservations with regard to the declarations which have been published this morning, declarations the text of which had not been communicated to him beforehand, has authorized us to report his conversation in the following terms:

"It is correct to say that the French and British Governments agreed not to reply to the note of the Holy See before Germany made known to what reparations and guarantees she was prepared to consent. The British Minister to the Vatican was invited to take the opportunity of explaining to Cardinal Gasparri that no serious step could be taken before the Central Powers had announced their intentions, particularly with regard to Belgium. When the French Government knew of the instructions given to the British Minister to the Vatican they expressed a desire that this diplomat should be also instructed to associate France with the reply of the British Government. The British Minister took it upon himself to leave a note with Cardinal Gasparri during the conversation, which could only be purely official.

"Cardinal Gasparri decided to send the nuncio at Munich the note which has just been published. In accordance with the views expressed by the French Government, the British Government felt that it might be dangerous to let ourselves become involved in a discussion which was at any rate premature, and they therefore gave instructions to their Minister at the Vatican.

"That is what the incident boils down to. The fact worth remembering is that Germany, when pressed by the Holy See to explain her intentions with regard to Belgium clearly, refused to do so. It is too obvious that in August and September, 1917, Germany had by no means decided to restore Alsace and Lorraine, or even to restore the complete independence of Belgium."

11.

OUR SPANISH MEDIATION IN LONDON

The handling of the commission entrusted to the Marquis of Villalobar (Spanish Minister in Brussels) by Secretary of State von Kühlmann gave rise to certain jealousies between

the Spanish Ambassador and the Spanish Premier or Minister of Foreign Affairs. As far as I know now (in 1919), the German Government never received an answer. For the rest, a good deal is still obscure. According to the "Isvestia" there was a conference of ambassadors in London.

"To-day Balfour summoned the representatives of the Allied Powers, France, Italy, America, Japan and Russia, and made the following communication in the strictest confidence. The Spanish Minister had told the British Ambassador in Madrid that a person very high up in Berlin had expressed a wish to enter into peace negotiations with England. After receiving this report from their representative, the British Government were faced with the alternatives of either leaving the German communication unanswered, or of replying with the greatest possible caution. To adopt the first course would be to give the German Government a chance of using England's refusal to strengthen their own position in Germany, and, what is more important, add fuel to the flames of the considerable agitation in Russia that England desired the utter annihilation of Germany, and was dragging Russia and the other Allies with her. The British Government would, therefore, give the following answer through their Ambassador in Madrid:

"'The Government of His Majesty is prepared to receive any communication which the German Government desires to make with regard to peace, and to discuss such a communication with its Allies.' . . .

"After discussing this question we all came to the conclusion that Germany was attempting to draw the Allies into an examination of her peace conditions. The present attempt of Germany confirms the fears which I expressed in my telegram No. 761."

12.

STATEMENTS ABOUT CONVERSATIONS WITH ME

(a) From the "Hamburger Fremdenblatt."

"Something more about Ludendorff and the 'annexations.' In the conversation with our editor-in-chief on September 21, 1917 (that is, at the time of the memorandum published yesterday), which we discussed in these columns last Saturday evening, Ludendorff said that, as a soldier, it was his business to see clearly how Germany was to be protected in future. He could not expose Germany's most important industrial area to the danger of seeing its valuable establishments destroyed by enemy aerial squadrons a few hours after the outbreak of war. That danger would exist if the enemy had a base as near as Belgium. Hence that particular war aim. But, continued Ludendorff, emphasizing each word, the general military situation must decide whether that aim is possible of realization. When any kind of approach was made by our enemies (there had been none hitherto) which seemed to indicate an inclination to negotiate honestly for peace, then, and then only, would it be time to make up our minds whether we would and should fight on to secure this war aim."

Further:

"No inference could be drawn from Ludendorff's attitude that he considered that arms should in no case be laid down until annexations had been secured."

(b) LETTER OF DR. BROCKMANN, OF DÜSSELDORF

"To His Excellency General Ludendorff, Berlin.

"Düsseldorff 87,

"Schaferstrasse, 3.

"17/3/1919.

"Your Excellency's Memoirs are now published. The principal charge which is made against you is that you wanted

to continue the war, whatever happened, until our enemies were completely defeated, i.e., until Germany's most extreme war aims were realized. Before me lies the report of a long conversation I had the honour of having with Your Excellency at Kreuznach in September, 1917. When I said, in the course of that conversation, that it seemed to me very desirable that we should secure the Flemish coast, Your Excellency remarked:

"'Yes, Herr Brockmann, but if we could get peace without the coast of Flanders now or soon, could we take the responsibility of continuing this terrible war in order to keep it?'

"Further, referring to the Briey and Campine basins, Your Excellency said that you attached no decisive importance to them and would not fight an hour longer for them if a good peace without them was obtainable. You said that the Berlin Government—I think you gave Count Roedern as guarantor—had given you figures to show that the acquisition of this area was not so important for our national industry.

"I will admit that I was inwardly thoroughly disappointed with those views of yours, as I myself had come to Kreuznach firmly convinced that we must at all costs secure the coast of Flanders and the Briey basin. It was only through the conversation with Your Excellency that I began to hesitate on the point. On the other hand, my visit to General Headquarters fortified me in my conviction that the war could only be won if a halt were called to the tendency towards unhealthy depression at home.

"As Your Excellency, in your correspondence with Herr Scheidemann, asks to be tried by a court of justice, I feel myself in duty bound, as an honourable German, to offer Your Excellency my evidence on this point. Further, Your Excellency may make any use you think fit of this communication. With the expression of my unchanging respect and loyalty.

"I remain, etc.,

"BROCKMANN,

"Advocate."

13.

EXTRACT FROM THE SPEECH OF COUNT CZERNIN OF DECEMBER 11, 1918, ON THE OPPORTUNITIES OF MAKING PEACE

". . . and in the second place I may remark by anticipation that we never received any offer of peace from the Entente. At various times feelers were put out between our representatives and those of the Entente, but these feelers never became concrete conditions. We were often under the impression that we were in a position to make a separate peace without Germany. But we were never told that Germany could retain her pre-war territorial possessions. The fact that the Entente always declared they intended to destroy Germany compelled us to join in Germany's war of defence whether we wanted or not. . . . A separate peace was a physical impossibility. . . . And, in spite of that dependence, the only way in which we could get peace was to bring Germany round to our way of thinking, i.e., persuade her to make a peace with sacrifices. The situation was always this and only this: that we could have made peace proposals at some particularly favourable military moment, proposals which must have been accompanied by real sacrifices, but would perhaps have had a chance of being accepted by the enemy. I believe myself that throughout the whole war there was *but one* moment at which such a step would actually have been very hopeful. That moment was after the famous Battle of Gorlice (May 2, 1915). . . ."

CHAPTER XIV

THE ARMISTICE TERMS WITH RUSSIA OF DECEMBER 15, 1917*

An armistice in the following terms is concluded between the representatives of the General Staffs of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey on the one side, Russia on the other, with a view to the establishment of a lasting peace honourable to all parties:

I. The armistice will begin at 12 o'clock noon on December 17, 1917 (2 p.m. on December 4, 1917, Russian date) and continue until 12 o'clock noon on January 14, 1918 (2 p.m. January 1, 1918). On the 21st day the contracting parties may terminate the armistice by giving seven days' notice. If that is not done the armistice will continue automatically until one or other of the parties terminates it by giving seven days' notice.

II. The armistice applies to all the military and air forces of the said Powers on the land front between the Black Sea and the Baltic. The armistice also applies to the Russo-Turkish Asiatic theatre.

The contracting parties agree that during the armistice they will not increase the number of the units they now have in line on the said fronts and in the islands of Moon Sound—even in respect of constitution and establishment—and will permit no regrouping on these fronts with a view to preparing an offensive.

* The main outlines were drawn up by me in May, 1917, and accepted by the Imperial Chancellor and the General Staffs of our allies. [The Author.]

The contracting parties further agree not to make any strategic troop movements before January 14, 1918 (January 1, 1918) on the front between the Black Sea and the Baltic, except for such movements as are actually in progress at the time of the signing of the armistice.

Finally, the contracting parties agree not to concentrate any troops in the harbours of the Baltic east of the 15th degree of longitude east of Greenwich and of the Black Sea during the armistice.

III. The most advanced line of wire of their own positions shall form the lines of demarcation on the European front. These lines may be crossed only in the circumstances set out in Para. IV. hereof.

Where there are no continuous lines, the line of demarcation shall be exactly half-way between the foremost occupied points. The ground between the two lines shall be neutral. In the same way navigable rivers which separate the lines of the two sides shall be neutral and considered unnavigable unless navigation is permitted by agreement. In those sectors where the two sets of lines are far apart the Armistice Commissions (Para. VII.) will settle and announce the line of demarcation as soon as possible.

In the Russo-Turkish theatre in Asia, the lines of demarcation as well as the question of communication through them (Para. IV.) will be decided by agreement between the supreme military authorities of each side.

IV. With a view to developing and strengthening friendly relations between the nations of the contracting parties organized intercourse between the troops will be permitted on the following conditions:

1. Intercourse is permitted to *parlementaires*, members of the Armistice Commission (Para. VII.) and their representatives. They must all be in possession of a permit issued by an authority not lower than a Corps Headquarters or Corps Committee, as the case may be.

2. Each sector held by a Russian division may have two or three crossing posts for organized intercourse.

For that purpose, and by agreement between divisions facing one another, communication posts will be established in the neutral zones between the lines of demarcation, and indicated by white flags. Intercourse is permitted only by day between sunrise and sunset.

Not more than 25 men from each side may converse at a time at the communication posts and they must be unarmed The exchange of news and newspapers is permitted. Letters, which must be open, may be handed over to be sent on. The purchase and exchange of articles of daily use is permitted at the communication posts.

3. The interment of the dead in the neutral zone is permitted. Details must be agreed between the divisions or higher authorities on each side.

4. The question of the return of released members of the army of one country who are domiciled on the other side of the demarcation line of the other country must be left to be settled by the peace negotiations. This applies to Polish troops also.

5. All persons who cross the line of demarcation of the other side, contrary to the above provisions 1—4, will be arrested and not released before the conclusion of peace or the termination of the armistice.

The contracting Powers agree to issue strict orders to their troops and instruct them fully as to the conditions of intercourse and the consequences of infringements.

V. The following stipulations are provided for the naval operations:

1. The armistice applies to the whole of the Black Sea and the Baltic east of the 15th degree of longitude east of Greenwich, and affects all the naval and air forces of the contracting parties in those areas.

As regards the question of an armistice in the White Sea

and the Russian coastal waters of the Arctic, a separate agreement will be made between the German and Russian naval authorities. Attacks on trade and war ships in the said waters shall cease, as far as possible.

A separate agreement shall be made containing provisions to prevent, as far as possible, any naval forces of the contracting parties from fighting in other seas.

2. Attacks from the sea or air on the harbours and coasts of the other contracting party shall cease on both sides in all seas. It is even forbidden for the naval forces of one side to enter the harbours or coasts in the occupation of the other.

3. Flying over the harbours and coasts of the other contracting party, as well as the line of demarcation, is forbidden in all seas.

4. The lines of demarcation run as follows:

(a) In the Black Sea: from the Olinka lighthouse (St. George's mouth of the Danube) to Cape Yeros (Trebizond).

(b) In the Baltic: from Rogekuel west coast–Worms–Bogskaer–Svenska–Hoegarne.

The establishment in detail of the line between Worms and Bogskaer will be assigned to the Baltic Armistice Commission (Para. VII., 1) with the proviso that when the weather or ice necessitate it the Russian naval forces shall be allowed to go to the Aaland Sea. The Russian naval forces will not cross to the south of the line of demarcation nor those of the Quadruple Alliance to the north.

The Russian Government guarantees that naval forces of the Entente which are, or subsequently find themselves, north of the line of demarcation at the beginning of the armistice will observe these conditions in the same way as the Russian naval forces.

5. Trade and navigation in the seas referred to in Clause 4 above are freely permitted. The drawing-up of regulations

for trade as well as the announcement of safe routes for merchant ships are assigned to the Armistice Commissions for the Black Sea and the Baltic (Para. VII., 1 and 7).

6. The contracting parties agree that during the armistice period they will make no preparations for offensive operations in the Black Sea and the Baltic.

VI. With a view to avoiding inconvenience and accidents on the fronts, training with infantry may not be carried on nearer than five kilometres, with artillery nearer than fifteen kilometres behind the front.

Mining operations on land shall entirely cease. Aeroplanes and captive balloons must be kept out of an air zone ten kilometres wide behind the demarcation line of each side.

Work on the positions behind the most advanced line of wire is permitted, but not such work as might serve the purpose of preparing an offensive.

VII. As soon as the armistice begins, the following "Armistice Commissions" (representatives of each State which has forces in the sector concerned) will assemble, to whom all military questions with regard to the carrying-out of the provisions of the armistice in the various areas will be referred.

1. Riga, for the Baltic.
2. Dvinsk, for the front from the Baltic to the Disna.
3. Brest-Litovsk, for the front from the Disna to the Pripet.
4. Berdichev, for the front from the Pripet to the Dniester.
5. Kolosvar,
6. Focsani, } for the front from the Dniester to the Black Sea, the frontier between the commission areas to be settled by agreement between Commissions 5 and 6.
7. Odessa, for the Black Sea.

These Commissions will have direct and uncontrolled telegraphic communication with the countries of their members

at their disposal. The lines will be set up by army authorities concerned on their territory up to half-way between the lines of demarcation. In the Russo-Turkish Asiatic theatre also, similar commissions will be set up by agreement between the highest military authorities.

VIII. The agreement for a cessation of hostilities of December 5 (November 22), 1917, and all other arrangements for a suspension of hostilities or an armistice which have hitherto been made for individual sectors of the front will be cancelled by this armistice agreement.

IX. The contracting parties will proceed to the subject of peace negotiations immediately after the signing of this armistice agreement.

X. Acting on the principle of the freedom, independence and territorial integrity of the neutral Persian Empire, the Turkish and Russian General Staffs are prepared to withdraw their troops from Persia. They will immediately get into touch with the Persian Government for the purpose of arranging the details of the evacuation and the measures required for the security of that principle.

XI. Each contracting party will receive a copy in Russian and German of this agreement, which shall be signed by the authorized representatives.

Signatures.

Brest-Litovsk,
December 15 (December 2), 1917.

Appendix to the Armistice Agreement.

With a view to extending and confirming the spirit of friendship evinced by the armistice, the contracting parties have undertaken at once to set about providing for the exchange of civilian prisoners and prisoners of war unfit for service through the opposing lines.

The contracting parties will at once devote their best efforts to improve the conditions, as far as possible, of the prisoners of

war in their hands. This shall be one of the most urgent duties of the Governments concerned.

With a view to advancing the peace negotiations and healing the wounds inflicted on civilization by the war as quickly as possible, measures shall be taken to re-establish cultural and economic relations between the contracting parties. For this purpose, *inter alia :*

The resumption of postal and trade intercourse, the circulation of books, newspapers and so forth within the frontiers delimited by the armistice.

A mixed Commission of representatives of all States concerned will immediately assemble at Petersburg to settle details.

Brest-Litovsk,
December 15, 1917.

Approved in principle and signed subject to a formal agreement.

Signatures.

The armistice agreement with Rumania contained similar provisions.

CHAPTER XV

MISCELLANIA FROM THE FIRST HALF OF 1918

1. Questions of responsibility.
2. The conferences at Berlin with Count Czernin on February 5, 1918.
3. Notes for the conference at Homburg on February 13, 1918.
4. Two proposals for a German political offensive in 1918.
5. English negotiations with Austria-Hungary.
6. Letter to the Imperial Chancellor on our policy in the East.
7. Secret conference between the Imperial Chancellor, the Field-Marshal and General Ludendorff at Spa on July 1, 1918.
8. An historic conversation.

1.

QUESTIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY

A.

LETTER FROM THE FIELD-MARSHAL TO HIS MAJESTY.

"G.H.Q.,
"7/1/1918.

"Your Majesty has been graciously pleased to command General Ludendorff and myself to co-operate in the peace negotiations. Your Majesty has therefore given General Ludendorff and myself the right and duty to see that the result of the peace corresponds to the sacrifices and achievements of the German nation and army, and that the terms of peace increase our material power and give us such strong frontiers

that our enemies will not dare to venture on a new war for a very long time. In all our conferences with the Imperial Chancellor, at which Your Majesty presided, we have referred to the importance of secure frontiers as a life and death question for Germany.

"In the one matter in which we are independent of the enemy, the question of Alsace-Lorraine, nothing has been done; the Imperial Government has not yet finally dismissed the idea of autonomy. In the conferences on the question of Belgium I have found only the greatest reserve towards military claims among the members of the Government.

"In the east Your Majesty has commanded the Austro-Polish solution. In spite of the serious objections which General Ludendorff raised to that solution, we have dutifully co-operated, after we had specified the demands which made that solution unacceptable, in accordance with Your Majesty's command. In our summary of December 18 we cut down our claims; we then hoped that Your Majesty would support the revised demands of Main Headquarters and the Imperial Government would act accordingly. I therefore believed I was right in telling General von Arz that even a proposal of the Austrian General Staff which demanded from us only certain minor rectifications of frontier were incompatible with the honour of Germany.

"On January 1 Herr von Kühlmann asked for Your Majesty's decision. Your Majesty adopted a line which seriously cut down our demands and thus made the Austro-Polish solution unacceptable to Main Headquarters. Your Majesty certainly permitted your decision to be subjected to closer examination; I do not know, however, whether a solution can be found which would be likely to remove our serious objections to the Austro-Polish solution.*

"The establishment of a State in the Ukraine may certainly

* On November 5, 1917, all the Ministers and Secretaries of State decided that such a solution was feasible, in spite of the opinion of Main Headquarters.

reduce the Polish danger for Germany. But unfortunately the state of affairs in Russia is so obscure that in my opinion the safety of the German Empire cannot be allowed to rest on that.

"Even the situation in Courland and Lithuania has become very uncertain as the result of the declarations of December 25. Reports which I received on January 4, about the attitude of the Letts in the case of a second ballot, have revived the misgivings I had put behind me on the 2nd. The door is still open to Polish agitation in the northern areas. My objection to the Austro-Polish solution will thus be greatly confirmed. Our military frontier question will become exceedingly difficult as a result.

"I do not think that the military situation is any sort of justification for Germany's assuming this new burden. We were entirely surprised by the decision of December 25. The subsequent decisions have improved our position somewhat, but created the situation which I have outlined above.

"The economic decisions have absolutely astounded Dr. Helfferich and Secretary of State Baron von Stein, as well as the industrial world.

"Generally speaking, I am bound to ascribe the hitherto unsatisfactory political and economic results to the inadequate preparations for peace negotiations on the part of the Foreign Office and the pliancy of our diplomacy towards our allies and our enemies.

"I have previously had many conferences with the Foreign Office, and gained the impression that it certainly allowed Main Headquarters to express its opinion, but only with the idea of going its own way ultimately. It was so in the Lithuanian affair; it is the same now with the Polish question, in which the Secretary of State asked for Your Majesty's decision on his own initiative without the Imperial Chancellor knowing anything about it.

"Judging by my impressions from Brest the German

representatives appeared to be more diplomatic than resolute. This is confirmed by the opinion of the Russian representatives themselves—their behaviour on January 3 and 4—their disgusting volley of abuse. It was frank surrender! The same impression prevails in many quarters in the army and is very likely to produce an unfavourable opinion of the Supreme Command, which is held responsible for all this in the army. I did not wish this, but I cannot prevent it happening. The long period of trench warfare and the confused condition of affairs at home have increased the openings for criticism. I cannot banish my misgivings that the method of negotiation and the results at Brest will make a very unpleasant impression on the army.

"In the Polish question Your Majesty has been graciously pleased to give the opinion of General Hoffmann preference over mine and that of General Ludendorff. General Hoffmann is my subordinate and has no responsibility in political matters. The procedure on January 1 has made the most painful impression on General Ludendorff and myself. It is a portent to us that, in a matter which touches the very life of the German Fatherland, Your Majesty has disregarded our opinion.

"The difficult position in which General Ludendorff and I find ourselves with regard to Your Majesty is the result of the conflicting views on the present and future military and political position of Germany. I am firmly convinced that the view we represent will lead to the strengthening of the monarchy and the extension of Germany's power, while the contrary opinion can only lead us down the mountain to the summit of which Your Majesty and his illustrious forefathers had guided Prussia and Germany.

"As long as we merely talk and do not act the clash of opinions does not matter. But as soon as action is taken, as now in the Austro-Polish solution (against Austria), or against the Russians at Brest, the gulf between the two conceptions

is clearly revealed. This condition of affairs, and therefore the present situation, will be repeated on every further occasion.

"It is Your Majesty's noble right to decide. But Your Majesty will not ask that honest men who have loyally served Your Majesty and the Fatherland should cover with their authority and their names actions in which they could not participate from inward conviction, because they regarded them as prejudicial to the Crown and the Empire.

"Your Majesty will not ask me to translate Your Majesty's proposals into orders for operations, which will be among the most serious in world history, if they are not required for the attainment of definite military and political goals.

"I most humbly beg Your Majesty to examine everything before deciding. My position or that of General Ludendorff must be immaterial where State exigencies are concerned.

(Signed) "VON HINDENBURG."

B.

"The Imperial Chancellor.

"No. 255. "Berlin,

"12/1/1918.

"TO FIELD-MARSHAL VON HINDENBURG.

"I have the honour of sending Your Excellency a copy of the draft declaration on the theory of constitutional responsibility which was formulated in to-day's discussion, and has been approved by Your Excellency and the First Quartermaster-General.

(Signed) "HERTLING."

1. In accordance with the constitution the Imperial Chancellor alone is responsible for peace negotiations. Divided responsibility is impossible. The Imperial Chancellor's responsibility for the peace negotiations extends to the objects to be attained, the methods to be employed and the results.

2. The highest military authorities have the right and the duty to be called in to the negotiations in an advisory capacity, so far as these negotiations concern military interests. During the war the extent of those interests is not limited to military affairs in the narrow sense, but also includes questions of industry, transport, labour (so far as the latter intimately affects operations) and the moral effect on the army of any measures taken. The military authorities may present their requirements in these departments on their own initiative at any time, but of course only in the form of suggestions and advice, or in that of objections; they cannot issue instructions which the Imperial Chancellor is bound to carry out.

3. Differences of opinion between the military authorities and the Imperial Chancellor must be composed by discussion. If that fails the decision of His Majesty the Kaiser must be taken. The decision given relieves the military authorities of their own responsibility in every case. If the Imperial decision goes against the Imperial Chancellor, he must draw the constitutional inference as regards his own position and offer his resignation.

"Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army.
"26475 P.
"Ref. R.K. No. 255 of 12/1/18.

"G.H.Q.,
"14/1/1918.

"To the Imperial Chancellor.

"May I offer the following remarks on the assumption that the declaration is only a part of Your Excellency's intended answer to my letter of 7/1/18, and that I may look forward to receiving a comprehensive reply at the same time as the declaration in its final form.

"As I have already said, the declaration seems to me superfluous. It contains nothing relating to Your Excellency's constitutional responsibility which I or General Ludendorff

had ever denied. In the case of myself and General Ludendorff, no constitutional relief from responsibility is required, as by the constitution we have no responsibility. Yet in our position, as it has developed—without any conscious action on our part—we feel ourselves jointly responsible to the German nation, history and our own conscience for the form which the peace takes. No formal declaration can relieve us of that sense of responsibility.

"If, nevertheless, Your Excellency elects to stand by the declaration, I must ask that it be framed as follows:

"1. In accordance with the constitution the Imperial Chancellor alone is responsible for peace negotiations. Divided responsibility is impossible. The Imperial Chancellor's responsibility for the peace negotiations extends to the objects to be attained, the methods to be employed and the results.

"2. The highest military and naval authorities, i.e., the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army, the First Quartermaster-General, the War Minister and the Chief of the Naval Staff, have the right and duty, in so far as the peace negotiations affect military interests, to be called in to co-operate in an advisory capacity in the negotiations, including the question of the methods to be employed.

"The definition of military interests is not confined to military affairs in the narrow sense, but includes any changes in the frontiers of the Empire, the question of our relations with other States, and—so far as these have an intimate effect on the conduct of operations in this or any future war—questions of domestic politics, economic questions, food questions, trade and transport questions, the interests of the working classes, and finally the moral effect on the army and navy of the measures to be adopted.

"The military authorities may bring forward their requirements at any time on their own initiative, though only in the form of suggestions, advice, objections or warnings. Demands

which concern the conduct of operations in the present war take precedence of all other demands.

" 3. Differences of opinion between the military authorities and the Imperial Chancellor must be composed by discussion. If that fails the decision of His Majesty the Kaiser must be taken.

(Signed) " VON HINDENBURG."

After further correspondence:

Clause 1 remained unaltered.

In Clause 2 the last sentence of the third paragraph was expressed differently:

" The Chancellor, in coming to his decision, will remember that demands which concern the conduct of operations in the present war take precedence of all others."

Clause 3 was put differently:

" 3. If the military authorities think they ought to press some demand which has been refused by the Imperial Chancellor, and agreement is not reached by the method of joint discussion, the decision of His Majesty the Kaiser must be taken."

C.

" MY DEAR FIELD-MARSHAL VON HINDENBURG,

" In a letter of January 7 last you have given expression to your views on the present military and political situation and the solution of the problems and questions it presents. I thank you warmly for the soldierly frankness and the extreme lucidity with which you have put forward your convictions. In this matter both you and General Ludendorff who, you say, identifies himself with your views, have shown yourselves to be men whose utter devotion and energy are indispensable to me for the further prosecution of the war. Nor can my confidence in you be shaken by the fact that I and my political adviser, the Imperial Chancellor, disagree with your views on

many points. It is in the very nature of things—and an ancient phenomenon which has often appeared in history and in no way surprises me now—that in the course of the greatest coalition war which the world has ever seen the soldier and the statesman should look at affairs from a different angle in individual questions of war aims and the method by which they are to be attained. It is your good right and even your duty to show the greatest energy in getting your views considered, just as it is the duty of the responsible statesman to put his own conflicting views before me. I have therefore submitted your letter to the Imperial Chancellor and I now enclose you a copy of his remarks thereon. I agree with what he says and confidently express the hope that in face of these views you and General Ludendorff will withdraw your further objections and devote yourselves, without regrets, to your task of conducting the operations. You may, my dear Field-Marshal, rest assured that you have my ear at any time, and that nothing is further from my mind than to refuse a hearing to your valuable advice. All the greater is my desire that you should not withhold it from me in the future, and with that request

"I remain,

"Your well-disposed and grateful King,

"WILHELM R."

ENCLOSURE TO HIS MAJESTY'S LETTER.

The first paragraph of the letter discusses the responsibility of Field-Marshal von Hindenburg* and General Ludendorff and the corresponding right and duty to see that the result of the peace is compatible with the sacrifices and achievements of the German nation and army, and that the peace strengthens us so much in the material sense and gives us such strong

* We were thinking rather of the moral than the constitutional responsibility. [The Author.]

frontiers that our enemies will be in no hurry to venture on another war with us.

It is therefore necessary to go into the theory and practice of responsibility.

The political structure of the German Empire knows only one responsible minister—the Imperial Chancellor. In political affairs—unless indescribable confusion is to ensue—His Majesty must be advised by only one supreme authority, the Chancellor. If importance is attached to the participation of the Commander-in-Chief in the peace negotiations the outstanding reason has been that in view of the great and vital military interests which are affected in the highest degree by the terms of the peace concluded, military considerations and views should have their weight both before and when decisions are taken. Those views have been considered, as their importance warranted, when political decisions have been made. Only the Crown can decide—on the report of the Chancellor who is formally and actually responsible—what measure of consideration must be given.

One of the happiest effects of the monarchical system we enjoy is the combination of the supreme civil and military authority in the person of the Monarch, who is thereby enabled to give final and conclusive decisions in questions of overwhelming importance to the State—questions in which, as frequently happens, political and military aspects are closely associated. If any considerable departure is made from this fundamental principle the whole structure of the State will be in serious danger.

The special position which Field-Marshal von Hindenburg and General Ludendorff enjoy means that their personal views and ideas claim greater consideration than the Government would usually give to those of the military leaders. In view of the well-founded confidence which the whole nation has in these officers it is only natural that they should feel they have a responsibility to justify that confidence. This

sense of personal responsibility cannot, however, be allowed to amount to this—that in political questions which are vital to the future of Germany such outstanding importance must be attached to the military point of view, in consequence of the moral weight of the individuals putting it forward, that political considerations which conflict with it must straightway give way.

It therefore would appear intolerable that the Field-Marshal and General Ludendorff should make the prosecution of their indispensable military labours dependent on the fulfilment of political demands when the decision as to the necessity of such demands has been assigned by the constitution exclusively to the Crown and its legal and responsible adviser. If the capital which the two commanders have made out of the confidence of the German nation is to be employed in political matters also to the point of claiming that their political views shall be accepted without question, it could only mean that both the military and political leadership should be in the hands of these gentlemen *and they should be responsible.* I cannot with any sense of duty advise that solution as the combination of the military and political executive in one hand would be an encroachment on the rights of the Crown and contrary to the fundamental principles of our political organism. It is probable that such a revolution in the government would have serious consequences at home, but as long as the present system is in existence it seems to me necessary that the limits of responsibility should be laid down in a formal declaration. I have put such a declaration before the two generals. It has been the subject of a conference and has been approved in its present form by those gentlemen and myself.*

Dealing with the various points of the letter may I make the following remarks:

The importance of secure frontiers has never been ignored

* See page 544.

by me at any time. I have never ceased to devote all my efforts to ensure that after this war our frontiers shall be as favourable as it is possible to make them. But it must be remembered that the security of our frontiers is not in all circumstances a purely military question. Our security is not only the assurance that it will be impossible in a military sense for our neighbours to cross our frontiers, but also the fixed determination of those neighbours to live in friendship with us. A frontier protection which was technically inviolable but seriously injured the political and military interests of our neighbours might well mean that we were sowing the seeds of future wars the prevention of which must be the task of our statesmanship after the war for the sake of the peaceful development of our nation. Moreover, rectifications of frontier would to a large extent bring foreign populations within the bounds of the German Empire, an unwelcome acquisition which could not be without far-reaching influence on internal politics.

In the last place, the constitution requires that questions of the acquisition of territory must be submitted to the Reichstag and, where Prussia is concerned, to the Prussian Landtag; it is very doubtful what their views would be, e.g., as to the acquisition of considerable areas populated by Poles. Thus with regard to the security of the frontier there are many considerations other than military ones which make it impossible to agree without argument that under all circumstances military demands must be accepted and acted upon by the political executive.

The question of Alsace-Lorraine has for a long time been the subject of continuous negotiations with the German state governments, as with the Reichstag. The serious objections to the autonomy solution I do not ignore, especially as in the earlier period of my official activity I did everything in my power to further a solution of a totally different kind. But as the other solutions have found most serious obstacles in

those very relations between the states of the federation, and the difficulties are not yet overcome, I am not yet in a position to make up my mind finally with regard to this extraordinarily complex question. In any case I must emphasize again to-day that it has so many political aspects that it is quite impossible for it to be settled in accordance with the purely military point of view.

The question of Belgium has been the subject of special discussion at various times, the last occasion being on December 18, at Kreuznach. Your Majesty has been pleased to command that we must try to secure the military and economic guarantees which we require by the method of direct negotiations with Belgium. At the moment there is no need for me to go into all these general principles, as the conditions on which peace in the west could be concluded cannot be foretold to-day, and the solution of the Belgian question will only be possible within the framework of the whole complex of problems then to be solved. To fix a programme to-day would mean to tie our hands for the negotiations. I have no particular need to insist that the question of military security will not be lost sight of. How far it can be achieved depends on the political and military situation at the time peace is made. Here again we must keep in mind the question how far the change in our future economic and political relations with this neighbour, especially the development of our Flemish policy, will diminish the probability of a future war with her so that the necessity of military guarantees would be decreased.

I have always recognized the necessity of military rectifications of our eastern frontier. But I have also always adhered to the point of view that such annexations must be reduced to a minimum and confined to what is absolutely necessary from the military point of view. I have never had any intention of deciding myself what that minimum is, as it is mainly a military question. This is one of those questions

in which only the Crown can give a final decision in the last resort, as political and military considerations are inextricably intertwined.

On the other hand, as the negotiations with Austria, in the prosecution of which Your Majesty took a personal interest, have for many months been in a state of flux owing to the absence of agreement on the demarcation of the frontier, Your Majesty has decided on the future frontier yourself without Herr von Kühlmann or myself having had any influence on the geographical details of that decision. Your Majesty has, however, declared yourself willing for the principles of your decision to be subjected to detailed examination.

I must only express my opinion that, having regard to the above mentioned right of the Reichstag and the Prussian Landtag to be consulted on questions of annexations, it seems to me desirable to restrict ourselves to a minimum programme. To enforce that programme against the Poles will itself mean great conflicts and give rise to serious difficulties. For the rest, although I myself attach great military importance to the acquisition of certain frontier strips, I certainly cannot agree that the whole policy of Germany should be thrown out of its natural course for the sake of a small piece more or less. Our relations with Austria-Hungary* are the pivot of Germany's whole policy. To consolidate and extend those relations in the military and economic sphere is the cardinal point of Your Majesty's foreign policy. But if this absolutely fundamental feature of our programme is to be carried through some solution of the Polish question is required which is compatible with the vital interests of Austria.

The more the attitude of our enemies in the west imposes on us the necessity of ending the war there by a decisive success of our arms and the complete triumph of the submarine operations, the greater is the importance of adhering

* At this time the Government was pursuing the Austro-Polish solution. By the beginning of February various Secretaries of State were opposed to that solution. [The Author.]

to our previous alliance policy. It becomes daily less probable that we shall have such relations with the Western Powers after the war as would make it possible for us to renounce the idea of strong military protection against them. We must therefore direct our policy to secure friendly relations with Russia and adhere to the alliance with Austria-Hungary, more particularly as the geographical situation of Bulgaria and Turkey make the value of our alliance with them dependent upon it. We must therefore avoid a solution of the Polish question which contains the seeds of future conflicts with Poland and, ultimately, Austria-Hungary also. Rectifications of frontier must be considered from that point of view. I do not in any way ignore the dangers arising from the situation in Poland as it has developed to-day. They are, however, the consequence of a situation which was created by the establishment of an independent Polish Kingdom, a situation which was a *fait accompli* when I took office and to which we must now adapt ourselves.

As regards Russia we have to solve the amazingly difficult problem of establishing good economic and political relations with the new Russia, completely freeing our rear in the military sense and at the same time separating large areas from the old Russian state and converting them into effective bulwarks on our frontiers. As we are unquestionably the victors and could compel Russia to bow to our will by military pressure, we could have achieved that aim simply by annexing the areas in question. But if we had done so we should have made tolerable relations with Russia impossible, certainly for some time to come, and we should have met with such strong opposition in our own country that it would not have been feasible to carry through the annexations, as it is constitutionally impossible without the consent of Parliament. It was therefore our task to attain our ends without the actual annexation of territory. For this purpose the first requisite was to get the Russians to negotiate with us and our allies

without regard to their own allies. We had therefore to break the Entente officially with a view to making a separate peace with Russia. To this first purpose applied the declaration of December 25, which represented a move in the political game which had begun in the east. Immediately after the publication of the declaration of December 25 the Supreme Command, in writing and verbally, raised objections to the tactics adopted. The negotiators in Brest-Litovsk were surprised at this attitude as the declaration had been drawn up with the full concurrence of General Ludendorff's representative, General von Hoffmann, after special discussion.* Moreover, as the attitude of the Russian negotiators could not be foreseen in detail before the negotiations began it was impossible to plan out every diplomatic move beforehand. That had necessarily to be left to the authorized negotiators. It is extremely inadvisable to interfere with their freedom of action at every stage of the proceedings and might even make the successful completion of the negotiations a matter of doubt.

Secretary of State von Kühlmann's estimate of the effect of the declaration of December 25 has meanwhile proved correct. The Entente have not put in an appearance to participate in the negotiations, the Russians have definitely decided to treat for a separate peace and—the most important item of all—as against the Western Powers we have thrown off the chains which were laid upon us by our previous declarations. In the eyes of the people the position of the Government has been strengthened, and foreign countries are in no doubt about our firm resolve, now that our enemies have refused all offers of conciliation, to end the war by military victory.

The first phase of the negotiations has thus led to a diplomatic victory. We must wait to see how they develop in the future.

* General Hoffmann was of opinion that this declaration had been drawn up at Kreuznach. This was not the case. [The Author.]

It is too soon to speak of economic agreements in the first part of the negotiations. The main purpose of the economic conferences in the last days of December was to examine the *terrain* and find out how far questions of this kind could be discussed at all with the Russian delegates present. The conversations did not get beyond the stage of a non-binding conference and there was indeed no intention of making any firm agreement. Interested circles and the imperial officials present were, however, given a basis on which to specify their desires and claims with a view to the definite negotiations to come. Whenever any single economic agreement is made the Government will have to anticipate the opposition of some group of interests or other, as it is impossible to do justice to all the interests which so frequently conflict. But interested parties of all circles are given plenty of opportunity to express their wishes.

With His Majesty's approval the minister Dr. Helfferich has been put in charge of the preparations. But it is quite untrue that these preparations have only just been begun. They have been in progress in the different departments for a long time and the business of Dr. Helfferich is primarily the co-ordination of the results obtained by the individual officials. The charge of inadequate preparation in the economic sphere is thus as devoid of foundation as those referring to legal questions and political claims. It is perfectly obvious that all the issues between two nations which have been at war for nearly four years cannot be settled out of hand in negotiations lasting five days. It is therefore unjustifiable to talk of the unsatisfactory political and economic results of the first phase of the negotiations.

Just as baseless is the charge of too much deference on the part of our diplomats towards our allies and our enemies, a charge which there is no attempt to support with actual facts in the letter.

In the last place, I must emphatically defend the Foreign

Office against the charge of being double-faced in its attitude in the conferences with the representatives of Main Headquarters. On the contrary it has been thoroughly straightforward at those conferences and has made its standpoint perfectly clear when their views differed.

As regards the attitude of the negotiators in Brest I may be allowed to remark that it corresponded to the instructions they received and the known intentions of Your Majesty.* These alone could have any weight with our representatives.

I have never for one moment ignored the great importance of the *moral* of the army and nation. I must however decline to allow our future policy to be determined by that, and that alone. We should be taking a disastrous path for the nation if we pursued a policy which aimed at temporary successes out of regard for public opinion without considering the subsequent effects of those successes. It is the duty of the statesman in power to refuse to be diverted by momentary crazes and bring about a state of affairs which guarantees the peaceful development of our national resources for generations. The Reichstag resolution, which was approved by a large part of the nation, was certainly a product of a momentary wave of feeling. The Government accepted it because at that time the actual military and political situation seemed to justify it.

The circumstances have meanwhile changed and the Government will now draw the necessary political inferences from the new situation without regard to the views held in many quarters. It must however claim its right occasionally to disregard the state of opinion in the nation and the army and take measures which may superficially look like weakness or forbearance but are actually the result of far-sightedness and statesmanship. It must be strong enough to face the responsibility even though future generations alone will be in

* The agreement on December 18 was different.

a position to realize the wisdom and propriety of the course it has taken.

At the end of the letter there is a reference to the differences between the views of the Field-Marshal and General Ludendorff and those of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The Foreign Secretary, however, does not pursue a policy of his own; he gives effect to the policy decided upon by me at His Majesty's command. In any case I may claim that I have never advised Your Majesty to adopt a policy which would lead to Germany's being brought down from the eminence to which Your Majesty and Your Majesty's predecessors had brought her. Unlike the exact sciences, in politics there is no single undebatable solution of any given problem; each must be dealt with on the assumption that every policy advocated is that which is best for the Fatherland. It is Your Majesty's province to decide what actual course shall be taken.

I do not doubt that in the future, as in the past, Your Majesty's wisdom will succeed in examining the advice submitted to you by your advisers and deciding upon the policy which is most likely to help the Fatherland, and that you will be able to convince the men who in the military sphere have rendered such incalculable services to Your Majesty and the Fatherland that they still enjoy the fullest confidence of their All-Highest War Lord. On the other hand, the political advisers who are distinguished by Your Majesty's confidence may also claim that the military authorities likewise should show the same trust in their efficiency and the mature political judgment they have acquired through years of experience.

Notes on the Above.

1. How far the sense of personal responsibility of the two Generals goes is their affair. Even in political questions which are vital to the future of the German nation it may very well

be that military considerations are of such pre-eminent importance—as where the very outcome of the war depends upon them—that they must necessarily take precedence of political aspects. Even His Majesty's decision cannot relieve the conscience of the generals.

2. The annexation of certain areas for the purpose of securing our frontiers is not demanded exclusively by the Supreme Command, but was approved by His Majesty at conferences earlier on, after the assent of the Imperial Chancellor and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had been obtained.

Any frontier guarantees other than military are inadequate. The fixed determination of our neighbours to live in friendship with us is a protection for our frontiers only so long as that intention suits the purpose of our neighbours. Austria will lose her strength of mind as soon as Poland has been strengthened to such a degree that she thinks she need no longer restrain her desire for expansion.

We must prevent the undesirable acquisition of a foreign population by German colonization.

The Imperial Government does not like opposing views in conflict with its own. It does not try to get its own way and surrenders to one demand after another.

3. After his letter of December 12, 1917, the Imperial Chancellor pressed for a decision in the question of Alsace-Lorraine until the end of that year. Even to-day (the end of January, 1918), no decision has been given. Main Headquarters has never claimed that the solution must be based on purely military considerations. The only aim it has ever had before its eyes is that in future French influence must be excluded from Alsace-Lorraine.

The Chancellor is right when he says that the necessity of military guarantees will be diminished if the nature of our relations with Belgium is such that this country will necessarily take our side in a future war. Belgium must

remain under German military control until she is ripe for a defensive and offensive alliance with us, both political and economic.

Appendix to the Memorandum of the Imperial Chancellor on the subject of Responsibility.

1. In accordance with the constitution, the Imperial Chancellor alone is responsible for peace negotiations. Divided responsibility is impossible. The Imperial Chancellor's responsibility for the peace negotiations extends to the objects to be attained, the methods to be employed and the results.

2. The highest military and naval authorities, i.e., the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army, the First Quartermaster-General, the War Minister and the Chief of the Naval Staff, have the right and duty, in so far as the peace negotiations affect military interests, to be called in to co-operate in an advisory capacity in the negotiations, including the methods to be employed.

The definition of military interests is not confined to military affairs in the narrow sense, but includes any changes in the frontiers of the Empire, the question of our relations with other States and—so far as these have an intimate effect on the conduct of operations in this, or any future war—questions of domestic politics, economic questions, food questions, trade and transport questions, the interests of the working classes, and, finally, the moral effect on the army and navy of the measures to be adopted.

The military authorities may bring forward their requirements at any time on their own initiative, though only in the form of suggestions, advice, objections or warnings. The Chancellor, in coming to his decision, will remember that demands which concern the conduct of operations in the present war take precedence of all others.

3. If the military authorities think they ought to press

some demand which has been refused by the Imperial Chancellor, and agreement is not reached by the method of joint discussion, the decision of His Majesty must be taken.

2.

CONFERENCES AT BERLIN WITH COUNT CZERNIN ON FEBRUARY 5, 1918

(Extracts from the Records.)

5/2/18. Conference with Count Czernin at the Imperial Chancellor's house. Agreement was reached to proceed as follows:

1. Peace with the Ukraine.
2. Peace with Rumania.
3. If possible, peace with Great Russia also.

With reference to 1. Czernin explains that Austria, with a view to meeting the demand of the Ukraine, is prepared to create a Ukrainian crown land in Galicia. A great sacrifice! The beginnings of a federal State! Austria is compelled to make this sacrifice. She needs the Ukraine, as otherwise she cannot hold out until the harvest.

Kühlmann is prepared to break with Trotsky within twenty-four hours of making peace with the Ukraine.

On February 5 the cry that something must be brought back in any circumstances from Brest, even if it means the abandonment of the alliance with Germany, compels Count Czernin (without saying anything about his intentions to Kühlmann, and in spite of the discussion of a number of political questions at Brest) to broach the question how far Austria is bound by her alliance with Germany. It was a surprise to all the German representatives that besides the Kreuznach agreement of May 17/18, 1918, a "Vienna Compact" had been drawn up by Czernin and Bethmann on March 27, 1917, which formed the basis of the alliance. It had not been mentioned by Bethmann at Kreuznach on May

17 and 18. It is characteristic that Herr von Kühlmann knew nothing about it; nor did Dr. Helfferich. It contained a minimum programme of peace terms and a programme in case of a particularly favourable outcome of the war. (For the text, see p. 419.)

Czernin said: "Austria must now know how far she is to go with Germany in this war. Her domestic situation makes it essential. In the document of March 27 it was agreed that the territorial integrity of the two States must be preserved; Austria must therefore go on fighting until the territorial *status quo* is assured, and *vice versâ*. She is no longer bound if Germany, finding the military situation is inviting, decides to fight on with a view to obtaining better terms. The rights and obligations of the two States in the first case must therefore be set out more clearly, and indeed in the form of a fresh and definite programme of the two Monarchies, countersigned by the political heads and signed by the two General Staffs."

On the German side it was insisted that the economic *status quo* must also be restored. General Ludendorff opposed an "agreement with negative war aims only"; we needed safety zones for our industrial centres in Germany, and therefore must have positive war aims. Czernin produced the draft of a memorandum dealing with the question, "How long must Austria hold out?" (See below.) The Imperial Chancellor asserted that on the German side there was no objection to the Austrian note even if it did not consent to the idea of positive goals. Further details were to be settled between Czernin and Kühlmann.

Draft of Fresh Terms of Alliance.

(Produced by Count Czernin on February 5, 1918.)

In authentic interpretation of the treaty of alliance it is confirmed that the alliance between Germany and Austria-Hungary, in accordance with its defensive character, imposes

on neither contracting party any obligation beyond the preservation of the territorial *status quo ante bellum.*

As soon as the territorial possessions, as before the war, of one party are secure, the other is not bound by the alliance to continue the war.

As, however, an economic war by the Entente against the Central Powers would injure them, and particularly Germany, and such a war would outweigh the advantages of slight territorial concessions, both parties declare as a reasonable interpretation of the treaty of alliance that neither of them will conclude a peace with the Entente until it declares itself ready to renounce the idea of such a war.

Both parties also declare that they will not avail themselves of any opportunity of making peace after the objects set forth above have been realized without consulting the other party, unless they are compelled to exercise this right by absolute exhaustion or for any other overwhelming reason.

In that case they will continue the war until a peace becomes possible which guarantees them greater political security and the chance of economic expansion.

Such a peace would provide:
for Germany—

for Austria-Hungary—

Finally, both contracting parties undertake expressly to support each other in the peace negotiations, to the end that both may if possible recover the economic position they held before the war—especially in respect of foreign relations.

3.

NOTES FOR THE CONFERENCE AT HOMBURG ON FEBRUARY 13, 1918

The campaign in the west which the year 1918 will bring is the most colossal military problem which has ever been set to any army, a problem which the French and English have in vain attempted to solve for two years.. I spoke yesterday with the commander of one army. He told me that the more he thought about our task, the more was he impressed by its magnitude. That opinion is held by all responsible officers in the west and the men too, if I am not mistaken. I think I have no need to give assurances that I, who have to give the Field-Marshal the data on which to base his request for His Majesty's decision, am more impressed than anyone by the magnitude of this military task. It can only be brought to a successful conclusion if the organizers are relieved of everything which can possibly hamper them, the very last man is brought up for the decisive struggle, and everyone is animated by the conviction which comes from love of the Kaiser and Fatherland and confidence in the resolution of the military leaders. These moral factors are not to be under-estimated: they are the foundation of all the greatest achievements.

Their effect must be intensified by the energy of our action in the east.

It must not be imagined that it will be a matter of an offensive like those in Galicia or Italy. It will be a colossal struggle which will begin at one point, continue at others and last a long time, a struggle which is desperate but will end victoriously if the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army is hampered in his plans and measures by nothing more than strict military necessities.

His first task is to release still more troops for the west from the east, not absolutely at once but in the course of the first six months. Hitherto, His Majesty's command is that 37

divisions must remain behind. That number is too large. Some divisions can still be withdrawn. It will not be possible to do more until the situation with regard to Russia and Rumania has been completely cleared up. It can only be cleared up by action or the conclusion of peace. In my opinion any other alternative would be intolerable for us from the military point of view. I must say this in the fullest sense of responsibility.

If we do not act while the position remains obscure and our troops are tied up in the east, we run the following risks:

1. We may let bolshevik Great Russia turn against the Ukraine. It has not recognized the independence of the Ukraine and in its last public utterance it speaks in the name of the federal Russian Republic. We shall endanger our treaty with the Ukraine and therewith the food supplies which we and Austria-Hungary need. We thus make our ultimate victory uncertain.

2. We may make it possible for the Russian Government and its recognized representatives to devote themselves continuously to the business of agitation in the German army and nation. This is an appalling prospect and as disastrous to our dignity as menacing to the *moral* of the army. As the recent strikes have shown our frontiers lie open to hostile propaganda. Our prestige in the occupied territories would suffer. At Vilna there is already a list of the Red Guard. Disaffection stalks through the land. Strong forces would have to be left behind.

3. Finland would go over to the Bolsheviks. We have supported her efforts to secure her independence and we should be leaving her in the lurch. We would thereby lose respect, confidence and moral authority.

4. We should abandon Esthonia and Livonia, a prey to agitators, to English influence, and perhaps even drive them into the arms of England. The Entente might get a new friend.

5. The courage of the Entente might be revived. The war would drag on even longer. If we make peace with the Entente Russia will come in too. We shall therefore fail to reach that most necessary goal of dealing with our beaten enemies in turn, and it will be difficult to secure the military guarantees required. It would have an unfavourable effect on the negotiations with Rumania, and we need the divisions now stationed there and the opening of the mouth of the Danube.

6. If we do not act, all these evil possibilities will materialize. With our rifles idle in our hands we shall watch the whole situation being transformed to our own disadvantage; we shall drive the good elements in Russia—that means the real Russia of the future—into the arms of the Entente.

But if we act, we shall consolidate our position against the Entente, confirm our peace with the Ukraine, make peace with Rumania, strengthen our position in the Ukraine and Courland, improve our military situation by occupying Dvinsk and part of the Baltic region. We may, perhaps, give Bolshevism its death blow, thereby ameliorating our internal situation and helping our relations with the best elements in Russia. We could also release strong forces from the east, and concentrate all our military and moral resources for the great blow which His Majesty has commanded in the west. A few days ago I had a conversation with Herr von Kühlmann. He was of opinion that we must immediately start an offensive in the east. I do not know what is responsible for his change of view.

In accordance with my duty I say that inaction in the west would create an intolerable military situation for me, and I humbly beg Your Majesty, when the Imperial Chancellor has recognized that the armistice is at an end and the way is open for operations, to prevent the military leaders from being hampered by political fetters and restore that freedom

of action which it enjoyed at the beginning of the war and before the conclusion of the armistice. That alone is really compatible with the very nature of war and the welfare of Your Majesty, the Fatherland and the army which is faced with the greatest task in its history.

4.

TWO PROJECTS FOR A GERMAN POLITICAL OFFENSIVE IN 1918*

A.

"Berlin,

"January 14, 1918.

I. The military decision between Germany and England is imminent. The capacity of resistance of the English home front is of overwhelming importance to the issue. Will that home front collapse under the weight of our military blows or not? That is the vital question.

Lloyd George himself fully realizes that everything depends upon the solidity of the English home front. He is again summoning up all his powers of suggestion to mobilize English resources and resolution once more to meet the coming trial of arms.

The great task facing German statesmanship to-day is *to hamper that mobilization.* When our military operations begin, the English home front must be so shaken that our military successes will have their maximum effect. The weeks preceding the opening of the offensive are the critical moment for these *political* preliminaries.

II. Lansdowne's action has produced a broad split in the English nation, a line of cleavage which does not follow the tracks of the old party divisions; Conservatives, Liberals and Labour are to-day opposing Conservatives, Liberals and Labour.

* The memoranda A and B were drawn up by Colonel von Haeften, and forwarded by me, with the strongest possible recommendation, to the Imperial Chancellor.

The domestic situation in England has been fundamentally changed by Lansdowne's letter. The peace movement is *now no longer unpatriotic.* It is true that Lansdowne has more or less used the same arguments as Ramsay Macdonald, but Macdonald has been anti-war from the start. Lansdowne, on the other hand, was not only in favour of the war after it had broken out, but it was his letter of August 2, 1914, which facilitated the English declaration of war.

Henderson, too, has followed Lansdowne. He is a thorough patriot, and has been frequently praised as such by Lloyd George. His reputation stands all the higher since Russia fell out, for it was he who, time after time, pressed the English Government, but in vain, to support the Kerensky regime by a democratic revision of the Entente's war aims.

III. Lloyd George is doing everything he can to suppress the new movement which was started by the Lansdowne letter. All the terrors of the coming German offensive are luridly described to the nation. The Lloyd George press has been presented with the battle cry—"Close the ranks, the country is in danger!" It was by appealing to Lord Lansdowne's patriotism in 1916 that he was induced to postpone his proposed action for another year.

We must not be in any doubt about the fact that the threat of a German offensive is cementing and consolidating England's forces. The English nation is gathering round its government in critical times and the anticipation of critical times. All England sees black months ahead to-day.

It would be utterly wrong to infer from this state of affairs that we must renounce the idea of a military victory if we are to break the English home front.

On the contrary, the insistent question is—how is it possible to defeat England in the field and exploit this blow to bring about a simultaneous collapse of the English war-machine, even at home?

IV. This is the answer. By a skilful, tireless political

propaganda on the part of the Germans the suggestion will be dinned into the English nation that the "knock-out" policy of Lloyd George is alone responsible for the continuation of the war; that it follows imperialistic aims of conquest, while a peace compatible with the honour and security of England could be obtained much sooner, and without further bloodshed, by negotiation.

On the other hand, if German statesmanship does not succeed in spreading that suggestion among the British nation, Lloyd George will have his home front consolidated for the decisive struggle and it will hold, even under the heaviest blows, until the American aid arrives. But we have a right to expect great effects from a successful political propaganda, and these effects should materially facilitate our operations.

V. We must not underrate the difficulties of the approaching fourth mobilization in England. The first was in August, 1914; the second began in February, 1915, and ended after the "Lusitania" affair in May, 1915, with the introduction of universal service. The third was in December, 1916, after our peace overtures. We could have hampered this last effort. Our political propaganda has hitherto always neglected its chances. It has never yet backed up the military operations.

1. A great inroad on the country's man-power by:

(*a*) an extraordinary increase in recruiting for the army;

(*b*) a great increase in agriculture;

(*c*) an extraordinary increase in shipbuilding;

(*d*) an extraordinary increase in the output of war material, especially airships, tanks and naval construction.

2. Rationing of available labour.

The intensified process of combing-out which this programme involves can only be carried out if the solemn promises of Asquith and Henderson to the trade unions are broken.

In the background there is industrial compulsion. This "rationing" system will have an intolerable suggestion of "Prussianism" about it.

The combing-out will hit those very working classes among which the centres of disaffection have hitherto been found.

We must not forget:

(*a*) The latest strike of aircraft hands at Coventry, which involved 50,000 men according to reliable reports. (See the Stockholm secret report of December 16, 1917.)

(*b*) The strike of machinists (100,000) in May, 1917, which Henderson admitted had prevented the punctual delivery of tanks and aeroplanes and compromised the English offensive.

(*c*) The dissatisfaction of the dockers has frequently led to delay in unloading important cargoes.

(*d*) The railways are a perpetual thorn in the side of the Government.

(*e*) Smillie is the most influential man among the miners. He is the founder of the English Workmen's and Soldiers' Council.

The fourth mobilization will thus come into collision with industrial unrest step by step. But we must not let ourselves be a prey to illusions. As long as practically nothing but class demands stand in the way Lloyd George will be able to settle each case peacefully by fresh promises and concessions. It is true that his work will be merely patchwork, which will avenge itself terribly after the war. But all Lloyd George cares is that the flimsy structure will hold during the war, for he ignores the objection that his war measures are undermining the very foundations of English culture and industry. Never for a moment does he forget that he is a lost man if the war ends without the defeat of Germany.

But what we need is the collapse of the Lloyd George system *during* the war. The industrial unrest will only lead

to the paralysis of England's war efforts when the main cry of the working classes is no longer—we want more wages, we want our future secured, we want the restoration of our trade union rules, we want an equitable distribution of food. Lloyd George can meet these demands by concessions and an appeal to patriotism. The working class movement will only become irresistible when it relegates class demands to second place *and cries for peace as a national demand*—just as is being done in Russia to-day.

It cannot be denied that even the recent great strikes were "infected with pacifism," to use a current phrase. But the peace programme was only a secondary matter, and to a large extent based on a vague internationalism, to which the sound instincts of the English workmen are themselves averse. It is only when the initiative in the peace movement no longer comes from below, but obviously is in the hands of the best English statesmen, that the pacifism of the working classes will become a great national movement.

In a word, international pacifism is powerless against Lloyd George, but he in turn is powerless against a patriotic peace movement.

VI. We have it in our power to make Lord Lansdowne speak out, and to force the new party forming behind him to a trial of strength. It may well be that this trial of strength will come in a few months in any case, and without any action on our part. But that would only help us towards peace. What we require is a policy which will help us here and now *to win the war.* The debate which Lloyd George would like to postpone to the Greek Kalends must take place now, in the weeks preceding the German offensive.

VII. We must have a series of public declarations by German statesmen, declarations which again and again hammer into the broad masses in England that it is only the imperialistic lust of conquest of Lloyd George, as revealed even in his latest speeches, that necessitates the continuance

of the war with its great sacrifices of blood and treasure, and that there has been no question on which Germany and England could not have come to a perfectly satisfactory understanding. Again and again must our propaganda emphasize and exploit the great moral weakness of the Entente, which consists of Lloyd George's rejection of all attempts at an understanding.

We shall recall the speeches of the Imperial Chancellor on December 12, 1916, and July 19, 1917, the reply of September 21, 1917, to the Pope's peace note, the speech of Secretary of State von Kühlmann on October 9, 1917, and the words of the Imperial Chancellor, Count Hertling, on November 29, 1917.

All these honest attempts at an understanding were answered by Lloyd George with nothing but scorn and derision and a demand for the destruction of Germany. He thus made it incompatible with Germany's sense of honour to treat further with England and intentionally frustrated all chances of an understanding. Even Lloyd George's latest utterances make no change in those intentions, for they reveal the English desire for conquests all the more openly because it is to be satisfied at the expense of England's allies. They are essentially propaganda speeches for the purpose of soothing the trades unions and the workers in English war industries. This intention, which is scarcely veiled, can only strengthen us in our conviction that *it is and will remain impossible to treat with Lloyd George.*

An understanding with the present English Government is out of the question, if only because it has come forward as the champion of the French claim to Alsace-Lorraine and the Italian claim to the Trentino. We must again and again rub in the sentence in Kühlmann's speech to the effect that the question of Alsace-Lorraine is the only one which stands in the way of peace. And we must lay special emphasis on the fact that the English people are shedding their blood for an imperialistic French war aim.

If we are to strengthen Lord Lansdowne's position we must influence the great mass of doubters. These form the *bloc* between the war party and the peace party, and they incline to war or peace according to their views of the military situation. Their opinion of the military situation becomes more optimistic with every German peace feeler.

Words are battles to-day. The right word is a battle won. The wrong one is a battle lost. If we want victory behind the English front as a preliminary to victory on the battlefield we must choose such words as will make it possible for the patriotic peace party in England to come out in the open and say: If you follow us the way is open to negotiations and England's honour and security are assured.

VIII. The prospective effects of such a German political propaganda are:

1. Increasing resistance to the fourth mobilization by the Liberal and Labour parties.
2. The failure of the new Military Service Bill.
3. The occurrence of strikes in the English war industries (munitions, aircraft, tanks, shipbuilding, etc.).
4. An intensification of the revolutionary currents among the English working masses, and thus,
5. A considerably lighter task for us in the coming German offensive.

IX. The Supreme Command must therefore press the Government most seriously to start some such political propaganda immediately, in order to support the military operations. We must not fail to exploit politically the weeks preceding the beginning of the military offensive. No means of winning victory and intensifying its effects must be left untried.

X. The leading organs of the Reichstag Majority Party must adopt a similar attitude towards England. They must take up a certain political line and lay special emphasis on the fact that Lloyd George's latest speech is in no sense an

offer of peace, but essentially a programme of domestic propaganda, and that Lloyd George has not departed in the least from his imperialistic plans of conquest.

On the other hand, the German Press must be forbidden to indulge in boasting or threats of the mighty German offensive. Such action only strengthens the hostile Governments and consolidates the enemy home fronts.

B.

VERY SECRET.

Berlin,
June 3, 1918.

A short time ago the well-known Swiss military writer, Hermann Stegemann, wrote that "the success of the great German offensive in France could have been multiplied a hundredfold if the military operations had been politically prepared beforehand and well backed up." The justice of that view is confirmed by the debate on May 16 last, in the English House of Commons, on the alleged German political offensive.

While peace overtures or a peace feeler are, generally speaking, an action which involves *a relaxation of one's own war efforts*, a political offensive is intended to sap *the enemy's determination* and prejudice the hostile operations.

Hitherto on the German side we have had nothing but peace feelers or peace overtures—public and private. The German Government have never yet undertaken a great political offensive with the object of shattering the enemy's home front and strengthening our own.

The period *after* military operations have come to an end is unsuitable. Even a political offensive will then act merely as a peace feeler, a sign of exhaustion and disappointment, and therefore an encouragement to our enemies to hold out until next year's campaign.

The political offensive must be carried on simultaneously with the military operations. If we show skill in this matter the effect must be such that our enemies will make peace overtures to us after the military operations have ended, and thus make it unnecessary for us to take any step which might be construed as a peace feeler.

There is no doubt that there will be a peace crisis throughout the world when the campaign of 1918 comes to an end. The first nation to succumb to it will be that whose home front has been most skilfully worked up in a political sense by its enemy in the months preceding the peace crisis, and is therefore least capable of resistance. In such a country the Government would be compelled from within to try and get into touch with the enemy.

There is no room for doubt that in the last few weeks our enemies have been living in continuous dread of a German political offensive, for they are fully conscious of the weakness of their home fronts, as clearly appears from an expression of the English minister Geddes:

"By a psychological catastrophe alone can we be beaten."

This psychological catastrophe can only be brought about on one condition—that a strong peace party in England comes forward openly to demand that the war shall cease while the Government insists on the prosecution of the war *in the teeth of public opinion.* In all the enemy countries there are more or less latent peace currents between which there is a certain connection. In England there is a strong national peace party, which includes important men from every political group. It is inactive at the present moment while fighting rages at the front. But it will be drawn from its waiting attitude when the moment comes at which the military operations seem to be approaching their conclusion, and it itself believes in the existence of a corresponding national peace party in Germany.

This is the Achilles heel, particularly of the English home front. We must exploit that discovery and at long last make the most ruthless use of the great resources which are at our disposal in the struggle with our enemies.

A political offensive of this kind, like military operations, requires far-sighted preparations, thought out down to the last detail, and careful execution.

It must begin at the very moment when there is another more or less considerable pause in the great battles in France, and the best time of all would be before the final act of our great offensive of 1918.

It is therefore necessary to prepare and work out *to-day* a scheme for such a political offensive.

The following are the outlines suggested:

I. PUBLIC DECLARATIONS BY UNOFFICIAL PERSONS

When the pause in the operations begins, there must be a series of public declarations in Germany which will give the impression in England, France, Italy and America that there is a strong party in Germany which is working for a general peace of understanding. Its programme must include general humanitarian objects similar to those which the Lansdowne group has inscribed on its colours.

It is most important to select the right men. They must not be out-and-out pacifists, but absolutely trustworthy from a national point of view. Their honesty must be so unimpeachable that even the pro-war agitators among our enemies will not dare to question it. We have a number of such men who enjoy that kind of reputation and confidence abroad. We could choose men from the circle of German princes, the high nobility, ex-statesmen and diplomatists, deputies of all the national parties, leading figures in the world of commerce, finance and industry, as well as the *intelligentsia*. All these

speakers must be given general outlines for their declarations from official sources. Each must be assigned a definite objective in the enemy home front, according to his personality and professional qualifications. The enemy must always find the same fundamental idea in all the declarations, even though the stamp of the speaker's individuality must not be lost. The impression of an officially organized step must be avoided at any cost. Of course, enemy countries are intended to trace the workings of a central will, but they must be induced to think that a definite group of independent men have come together to put pressure on the Government. They must not suspect the true connection.

II. OUTLINES

The following are proposed:

A. General.

Germany's moral task in the world war and her just political claims.

B. Particular.

1. Our aims in the East:

(*a*) The goal of our Eastern policy is not the oppression of the border States, but the safeguarding of their political freedom and order.

(*b*) The protection of the Eastern European peoples against the destructive forces of Bolshevism; to secure the great moral and economic values in Eastern Europe which are either being destroyed altogether or are not being exploited at all. Germany's right and duty as a neighbour to bring internal order and freedom to these regions in the name of Europe.

(*c*) Following out this line of thought, we must hammer into the world the truth about the succession of events which led to the Peace of Brest-Litovsk.

Only thus can we combat the Entente propaganda, which seeks to discredit the Brest-Litovsk treaty as a peace of forcible annexations.

We must not be afraid of public opinion in this matter.

(*d*) Germany's right and duty to restore to those of her own race in Russia their lost status in the Baltic States, that ancient home of German colonization.

German prestige demands that we should hold a strong protecting hand, not only over German citizens, but over *all* Germans.

(*e*) The justification of our entry into Livonia on national and international grounds.

2. The security of the food supply and economic resources of Europe by opening up the enormous untapped resources in the East, thus warding off the danger of a raw material blockade, which the Entente is threatening.

3. Security of private property on land and sea in all future wars. Freedom of the seas. There must be an end of the situation in which the maritime nations can only exist at England's good pleasure. The abrogation of the right of prize. The U-boat is a weapon in the service of this goal of common humanity. This will also secure the future of the States which are weak on land.

4. Universal protection of labour in all countries is one of Germany's war aims.

Our ideal system of labour legislation contains valuable principles which form a weapon which we have not used hitherto in the political conflict. Our superiority in this department must be exploited, even in our foreign policy. By adopting the principle of universal labour protection as a German war aim we shall gain the sympathies of the working classes all over the world.

5. The greatest moderation in political claims in spite of brilliant military victories; a proved tradition of old Prussian

policy. Even to-day Germany is ready, if our enemies had an honest desire for an understanding, to conclude a peace which is compatible with their interests and honour.

However mistaken it would be at the present moment for any declaration to be made on the Belgian question *in official quarters*, it would be very effective if this subject also were broached by more or less private individuals on this occasion, their statements being based on the public declarations made by the present and former Imperial Chancellors. Such statements would put the strongest possible weapon into the hands of the peace parties among our enemies—particularly England and America—for their propaganda against the war.

6. It is generally desirable that the world's sense of justice should be captured for the German war aims, indeed that it should be convinced that an influential and leading group in Germany has accepted the general ideals of the world and humanity with greater fervour than the spokesmen of the Entente.

7. In this connection the debate on the question of the responsibility for the war must be taken up afresh. For the first time there must be not merely official statements in Germany's defence but free, patriotic criticism, which will take up the cudgels and result in the condemnation of the Entente and the moral justification of Germany. After the colossal piece of propaganda—the effect of Lichnowsky's memorandum on the enemy's case—the best informed Germans of the highest standing must come forward to champion the purity of our cause.

8. All the speeches must attack directly the "knock-out" agitation of the hostile Governments. Their immoral war aims, their habit of concealing the truth from their own peoples, their frivolous under-estimation of their enemies, and their provocative contempt must be ruthlessly exposed.

It must be clearly indicated that the German spokesmen

consider that negotiation with those now in power in the enemy countries is impossible. It is this which will appeal most to the peace parties there and help them in their struggle with the present Entente governments.

III. THE STAGE MANAGEMENT OF THE DECLARATIONS

When the declarations on the lines above described have been arranged, the actual form of words, as has already been suggested, must be left to the individuals concerned, though the declarations must be submitted for examination by the official authorities before being delivered. They must then be systematically distributed over the whole period marked by the pause in the operations, and to a certain extent be connected. They must take the form of speeches, interviews, newspaper articles, pamphlets, and so on.

A skilful official management has to secure that they get the greatest possible publicity abroad and at home, give rise to no kind of misconception and, in particular, are not interpreted as *official* peace overtures.

For this purpose a clever uniform manipulation of the great leading journals of all colours is required. Certain trustworthy journalists must be taken into our confidence and told that *the affair is essentially a support for our military operations*, that is, an attempt to mobilize the peace parties among the Entente with a view to hampering their military effort. Of course the Press must be left the right to take what line they like in accordance with their party views. But what must be prevented at all costs is that the *official* participation in the political operation should be betrayed even by a hint. On the other hand, enemy countries must be deluded in every way possible into thinking that the declarations are the prelude to a German peace offer. This certainly does not preclude us from preventing that impression at home by cleverly influencing the Press.

IV. THE PROSPECTIVE EFFECTS

There is no doubt that the first feeling among the Entente will be one of general relief—Thank God, the colossal danger of the German offensive is over. The *War party* will immediately exploit that feeling to start a great agitation in favour of continuing the war. They will give an attractive picture of the futility of the German military operations and prophesy the imminent collapse of Germany. German militarism, of which the great offensive was the last resource, has suffered a decisive defeat. Germany will soon be on her knees asking for peace. All that we have to do now is to prolong the war until America comes in to bring about the utter collapse, internal and external, of Germany. Of course, there will be a simultaneous and violent agitation against all the peace groups among our enemies. Fierce attempts to silence them will be made. On the other hand, when these groups think that the immediate military peril is over, remembering the rejection of the series of peace overtures of Germany and Austria, they will raise a loud cry that so favourable an opportunity must not be allowed to slip this time and that the path to an understanding must be thoroughly and honestly examined. These irreconcilable differences will lead to a violent conflict among our enemies.

Another disruptive element will be the *English military party*, which will come forward and try at last to get rid of the Lloyd George they loathe so heartily. A cry for the blood of those responsible for the military disasters will be heard once more.

There will be a spasm of the most violent unrest among the workers in the war industries. Patriotic reserve will be thrown to the winds once the immediate military danger is over. The Government will be compelled to take the sharpest measures of oppression in the industrial centres where pacifist

sympathies are patent to-day. We may expect strikes and even revolutionary disturbances. Now, in the midst of all this domestic turmoil among our enemies, this struggle of all against all, there falls a bombshell, another great military blow, utterly unexpected. The effect of this blow will then be decisive. The catastrophe which the Minister Geddes feared will materialize. The whole fury of the nation, betrayed and disillusioned, will fall on the war party. They alone will be charged with the responsibility for the latest military misfortune in view of their rejection of all suggestions of peace.

The advocates of peace will have been brilliantly justified. A great national movement will come into being behind them and it will probably lead to the overthrow of the Government and bring into power men who are ready for an understanding. It may well be that the movement may emanate from England because there is a national peace party, openly organized, in that country. But when the English home front breaks down we should have to expect the moral collapse of France and Italy also.

Our successful offensive *alone*, without political support, could never lead to such results.

Of course, there is no doubt that our military successes, especially the latest, have already made the greatest impression on our enemies. Confidence in the political and military leaders of the Entente has suffered a severe blow. But these successes will not bring us peace by themselves; for that we need a political victory behind the enemy fronts. As has been explained above, there will be a mighty peace movement throughout the world when the campaign of 1918 comes to an end. That movement harbours a danger, not only to our enemies but to ourselves also, and we must not close our eyes to it. The war parties among the Entente are already hard at work suppressing the peace movements in their own country with a view to prolonging the war through the fifth war

winter into the year 1919, " when the Americans will be there." Their efforts will succeed if we remain politically inactive.

At the present moment the peoples of the Entente have, generally speaking, a firm conviction of the decisive intervention of America in 1919. This lays on us the obvious duty of leaving no stone unturned to strengthen the peace movements among our enemies to such a degree that they assume the dimensions of a panic and bring about the collapse of the home front.

The proposed political offensive will take us to that goal. Such an offensive would also make it possible for us to keep a tight hand on our peace movement and even direct it. If we do not get a strong and definite control of it, the radical and nationally doubtful elements will take the leadership out of our hands, and the whole movement will slide on to the Scheidemann-Erzberger rails, as happened in July, 1917. Our peace movement at home might then lead to a peace catastrophe. This is no mere pessimism but an honest effort to look at things as they really are, and to prepare to meet dangers the possible development of which one has foreseen.

In contrast to previous occasions we must not let ourselves be swept along by events and wait for the political fruits of our victory to fall into our lap some day. Without the application of systematic statecraft before the conclusion of the military operations that peace cannot be secured which alone is compatible with our interests.

V. NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ENGLAND AND AUSTRIA-HUNGARY

(Ambassador Count Wedel, in the " Hamburger Nachrichten.")

Count Czernin's efforts went further. In the spring of 1918 there was another flicker of hope. There was a meeting at Geneva between the Boer General, Smuts and the Austro-Hungarian ambassador, Count Mensdorff. The

initiative had been taken by England. That seemed hopeful. Lloyd George sent General Smuts, who was a close personal friend. Vienna found the right man in Count Bernstorff, who had been ambassador for many years. He had been very popular in London, where great confidence had been placed in him, and it was known that his sympathies were Anglophile, that he had done his best to prevent the war and that he intensely regretted the outbreak of the conflict. Count Czernin could therefore be certain that this tried diplomatist would choose his words well. He could also feel certain that this conscientious official, with his strong sense of responsibility, would keep closely to the instructions which he gave him.

These instructions were to put the question immediately as to the possibilities of a general peace and find out whether those possibilities covered Germany also. If so, to propose that representatives of the German Government should be called in. If not, to declare that further conversations were useless. As Count Mensdorff told me after his return, Smuts answered his question to the effect that there could be no parleying with Germany. Count Mensdorff's reproachful query whether the other side were not at length desirous of putting an end to the process of mutual extermination or still thought they could defeat the German army received the reply: "No, we don't think that; we are under no illusion and do not believe that we can conquer Germany in the field. But the moment at which to treat with Germany has not yet come." That was in the first months of 1918. So they did not think they could beat us even then!

Ambassador Count Wedel goes on to describe a conversation he had in the autumn of the previous year with an English officer holding a high position in the Entente Commission in Vienna. In the course of the conversation the Englishman came to speak of the chances of an understanding. He said that an understanding was possible as long as Asquith was at the head of affairs. Asquith and Grey, his man of peace, had

both slipped into war against their will and would therefore have been only too glad to end it if any acceptable opportunity had presented itself, not because they feared defeat but because they saw a great danger for all Europe, and therefore England itself, in a protracted world war. He asked if we in Germany had not noted that a few months after the outbreak of war Grey had stated publicly that if an agreement could be come to on the restoration of Belgium peace could be made at once. Of course we had noted it, but at that time the entire German nation was expecting great victories both in east and west, the occupation of hostile territory and indemnities for all the sacrifices incurred!

The situation had changed completely, the Englishman went on to say, since Lloyd George had seized the reins of government. He had a totally different conception of the issues of the war to his predecessor. Lloyd George was convinced that the struggle for the hegemony of Europe between Germany and England must be fought out to a decision once and for all. A premature peace would be followed by another war in which Germany would possess a very different submarine fleet and England would be unable to call so many allies to her aid. In the second war England's chances would thus be much worse, while Germany's were greatly improved. Lloyd George was absolutely certain of that. He had therefore time after time insisted on the necessity of continuing the war to a final decision and declared that the war must end "with one side on top and the other below."

The officer asked whether this declaration of England's leading statesman had been thought bluff in Germany. *Since Lloyd George had taken the helm a peace of understanding had been out of the question,* for the calculation was that, though victory on the battlefield could not decide, a long-drawn-out war was bound to do so, as in the long run the Central Powers were certain to succumb in view of the fact that they would come to an end of their man-power and material

earlier than the Entente, which had almost inexhaustible resources to draw on. England could never really have lost the war, even if she had eventually lost Paris or Calais. She would have continued the war at some other point and finally compelled Germany to surrender with the help of the blockade. England could never have been beaten on land; only at sea. The German fleet, however, was not strong enough for that purpose, and in spite of its unpleasant effects the U-boat campaign had not yet seriously menaced her. The defensive measures adopted—especially the convoy system—had hampered the U-boat operations and included a splendid organization all over the world for the adequate replacement of tonnage.

The officer had been at the front and perhaps did not know that Lloyd George was very concerned about the rate of sinkings. Or perhaps as a soldier he did not like admitting a danger to England which was revealed in the summer of 1917 by the nervousness of even the English Press.

Returning to the question whether a peace of understanding was ever possible, from my observations in Vienna I am bound to reply that there was a moment in 1917 when peace was within the bounds of the possible in the Austrian sense, that is, " with real sacrifices." But even for that skilful statesmanship would have been required and firm support from the Press and the public in Germany and the States allied with her. In the German sense, that is, more or less on the basis of the *status quo ante bellum*, a peace of understanding was impossible in the last two years of the war. The Allies had fixed on a definite programme based on views which corresponded to their own interests, and their war aims had been embodied in binding compacts between them. They were in no way inclined to make these dependent upon the attitude of Germany. That would have involved the presumption that they felt themselves menaced and in jeopardy to the highest degree and compelled to combine in a war of defence. They

themselves contradicted that view quite decisively. They admitted that before it was too late they wanted to overcome the young German giant who was too much for them and to whom they imputed ambitious plans of world conquest—in order to put themselves superficially in the right—and who was told that he had "begun it," after the fashion of schoolboys. They alleged that this was for their own security and the protection of small nations and the freedom of the world.

We have been reproached with over-estimating our own power. I think that the charge applies to some extent, even to-day, to the advocates of the view that the Entente felt it was being taken by the throat and would have been glad to hold out the hand of reconciliation if we had guaranteed that it should suffer no retribution or loss. In Germany the conflict between annexationists and anti-annexationists raised a cloud of dust which seemed almost impenetrable, even to the eyes of conscientious seekers after truth. Preconceived opinions and bitterness over the great disaster have done the rest, and the result is that the whole course of the efforts to get into touch is not known. Only particular moments and episodes have come to light and these do not give a true picture. In Austria, where no such conflict raged, the atmosphere remained clear, and discord and doubt as to the possibilities of an understanding played practically no part.

VI. LETTER TO THE IMPERIAL CHANCELLOR ON OUR EASTERN POLICY

"Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army.

"No. R. 439 P. "G.H.Q.,
"9/6/1918.

"To the Imperial Chancellor.

"I must ask Your Excellency's permission to set forth my views on the military and political situation in the east. In view of our shortage of man-power we shall have to make

further calls on our divisions there. They are strong enough to perform their function of an army of occupation, but they will not be adequate if the position in the east gets worse. The ambiguous attitude of the Soviet Government compels us in any case to look round for additional allies in the east.

"In the north there is Finland which is secure in a military sense, thanks to our entry into the country, of which Your Excellency approved. We may hope that we shall find firm military support in Finland for every emergency.

"The Ukraine has not yet succeeded in forming an army. We need the Ukraine, both for supplies of food and raw material. We are thus justified from the military point of view in using troops there. Otherwise it would be a mistake.

"As in Finland, Georgia offers us a chance of multiplying our resources with weak forces. We must organize the Georgian army there. For that purpose it is absolutely necessary to recognize the Georgian State and take it under our protection. In this connection there is the ethical factor that Georgia is a Christian State to which we have held out great hopes for a considerable time. The recognition and protection of Georgia by Germany would at the same time be the only method of keeping grasping Turkey out of that country. If we refuse there will be no end to the difficulties there. Please avail yourself of the presence of Herr Tschenkeli to examine his extensive powers and, as suggested, act in Georgia in such a way as to help our operations. We cannot defer our decisions until we receive the first reports of General von Kress. If we make a *point d'appui* of Georgia we may hope that the Caucasus will gradually be pacified and that we shall be able to tap it for the raw materials we so urgently require.

"I must particularly insist that we shall have to deal with Turkey herself and must show ourselves to a certain extent conciliatory towards her wishes. The railway from Batum to

Julfa via Tiflis is of vital importance to her for her operations. The possibility of transporting troops by this railway must be secured to Turkey.

"We cannot give up our claim to have the Tiflis–Baku railway worked under German influence. The Turks must give way to us on this point. Nor must Baku be handed over to the Turks. We shall have to wait for General von Kress to report on the situation in the Armenian and Tartar districts of Trans-Caucasia. Our guiding principle must be that Turkey must not hamper our efforts to build up a Georgian army and get supplies of raw material from the Caucasus. If Turkey laid hands on the Tiflis–Baku railway and occupied Baku—which would mean the destruction of the petroleum industry there—her action would therefore be hostile to us.

"If the views given above are correct we may expect military support in the east from Finland and Georgia. But that is not enough. We must try, unofficially and cautiously, to get into touch with the Cossack tribes of Cis-Caucasia which are trying to break away from the Soviet Government. We might take a step in that direction by handing back the Russian arms we have captured in return for a guarantee that they will not be used against us.

"I believe that with these measures we shall have done everything in the military sphere which our position in the east requires at the moment. But it is otherwise in the political sphere.

"I can only regard the dishonest agitation of the Soviet Government with the greatest misgiving. I have frequently mentioned this matter to Your Excellency. The telegram enclosed throws particularly glaring light on the attitude of that Government. I need only recall the question of our prisoners, the support given to the Finnish Red Guards by the Soviet Government, the treatment of the Entente troops on the Murman railway, the question of the Novorossisk ships

and the matter of resuming commercial relations with us. Particularly serious is the attitude of the Soviet Government towards the Czecho-Slovak, Serbian and Rumanian troops, notwithstanding Herr Joffe's denials.

"Instead of demobilizing them, as the Soviet Government has agreed to do, it has armed the Czecho-Slovak and other troops or allowed them to remain as organized bodies, first to fight against us in the Ukraine and ultimately to be transported to the Murman railway and the Far East. From there they are to be conveyed to France—that is the Soviet Government's idea—in order to fight against us. It appears that it would have suited the Entente better if these troops had been concentrated on the Murman and Siberian railways so that they could make themselves masters of Russia. The Soviet Government now changes its mind and suddenly declares its intention of disarming the Czecho-Slovak troops, etc. It is a perfect example of its duplicity.

"I may mention also that the demands of the Soviet Government in Kieff became much more extensive as soon as it realized that we would not really cross the line of demarcation, although it protested time after time against our alleged advance.

"As soon as it is in a position to do so the Soviet Government begins to adopt the same attitude towards us as it did at the time of the first negotiations at Brest. It procrastinates in all matters which are important to us and works against us wherever it can. We have nothing to expect from this Soviet Government, although its existence is dependent upon our good pleasure. It is a permanent danger to us, a danger which can only be lessened so long as it continues to recognize us, through fear of Germany and anxiety for its own position, as undisputed masters, and shows itself ready to carry out our wishes. A strong and uncompromising attitude towards the Soviet Government therefore seems to me the right course. We must put forward the claims our military

situation demands without hesitation and unconditionally if we are to have no unpleasant surprises in the east.

"Hitherto, the Soviet Government has not given proof that it is able to govern a country. Up to the present it has done nothing but destroy; it now wants to reconstruct, with a strong tendency towards the right. It has not the officials for it. In any case there are strong currents flowing against the Soviet Government; we must not lose sight of them.

"Even if we deal officially with the Soviet Government only, we must still maintain relations with other parties in Great Russia or we may suddenly find ourselves without friends. No faith can be placed in the adherents of Kerensky as they are absolutely bound to the Entente. On the other hand, we must somehow get into touch with the more monarchist groups of the Right and obtain such influence over them that the monarchist movement will take the direction we want when it gets the upper hand. The Entente also have realized its importance. I hear from a reliable source that through the French ambassador Noulens they have already offered the monarchists their support in rallying the conservative elements and establishing a constitutional monarchy. The offer was received courteously but has not been answered so far.

"In the economic sphere, before a general peace is concluded we must have some definite agreement with the Russian nationalities, otherwise we shall run the risk of their doing everything they can to improve the Treaty of Brest in their own favour. This applies to the Soviet Government in any case. Moreover economic treaties in the east would nullify the Entente's threats of an economic boycott of Germany and thereby strengthen our world position enormously at the peace negotiations.

(Signed) "P. p. LUDENDORFF."

VII. SECRET CONFERENCE BETWEEN THE IMPERIAL CHANCELLOR, THE FIELD-MARSHAL AND GENERAL LUDENDORFF AT SPA ON JULY 1, 1918

1. *The Kühlmann Case.*

The Imperial Chancellor. There were unfortunate circumstances attending the Secretary of State's speech. He was tired and did not have sufficient time to prepare his speech owing to the previous sitting of the Main Committee. He had no time for his breakfast, so the tone and impression of his speech were dull, as if he had lost the threads of his subject in the second part. No objection could be taken to his first part. The Bernhardt article which appeared the same day and seemed to follow similar lines of thought had also confused opinion. As Bernhardt was supposed to be in touch with Main Headquarters there were grounds for the impression that the speech of the Secretary of State had been made by arrangement with the General Staff.

K. only gave me a broad outline of what he was going to say. The impression I received on hearing the speech was not so bad, but I learned immediately of its unfavourable effects. Unfortunately Kühlmann's second speech has not improved matters.

The Field-Marshal. Main Headquarters has never made a secret of its lack of confidence in the Secretary of State.

The speech has had the most disastrous effect on the army. It is in the sharpest contrast to the last speech of His Majesty. The Secretary of State *must* find time to prepare speeches as important as this. The "Frankfurter Zeitung" and "Berliner Tageblatt" are behind him. It gives the impression of a struggle between Kühlmann and the Reichstag Majority and the Imperial Chancellor.

The Imperial Chancellor promises the participation of Main

Headquarters in the Press Conference (Nikolai-Würz telegram) and puts forward a most urgent request that communications of that kind, which contain criticisms of Government officials or reveal differences of opinion between Main Headquarters and the political heads, should be addressed to him and not directly to wide Press circles.

General Ludendorff explains the origin of the communication. In view of the serious danger to the nation's *moral* through Kühlmann's speech, speedy action was required if the Press was to be reassured at once and kept from coming to false conclusions about our military situation.

2. *Our attitude to England.*

The Imperial Chancellor. What course will the war now take? Though I have the most complete confidence in our strength and determination to conquer I am bound to put the question—can we destroy England?

Main Headquarters. We cannot destroy her, but we can greatly weaken her.

Chancellor. If England ever became ready to negotiate for fear of falling entirely under the dominant influence of America would we listen to her?

Main Headquarters. Of course, Main Headquarters has never refused to do otherwise.

Chancellor. We are therefore agreed that our first step is to strike with all our might once more and then be ready for a reasonable appeal.

Main Headquarters. In the last few months we have dealt the Entente such blows that public opinion there must be depressed; England must be telling herself that she has still much to lose. If she realized that and made approaches to us, Main Headquarters would always be ready to listen. But any step which is taken must be marked by the dignity and energy which are worthy of Germany's achievements.

3. *Suffrage Reform in Prussia.*

Imperial Chancellor. There is still hope that a conflict can

be avoided. The belief that the Government will keep the promises it has given must be maintained and therefore we must have a dissolution in the background as *ultima ratio.* The Bill will go to the Upper House, whose amendments may provide valuable safeguards. The Bill cannot be returned to the Chamber of Deputies before September. A decision must then be taken. Agitation among the working classes on account of alleged procrastination will be countered by Vice-Chancellor von Payer, who has given very real and practical help in all matters.

VIII. AN HISTORIC CONVERSATION.

Lersner to Loucheur. On July 15, 1918, he had been at German Headquarters. There Ludendorff had said to him: "If my blow at Rheims succeeds now, we have won the war."

Loucheur. It was a peculiar coincidence, but on July 15, 1918, he was at Foch's Headquarters. Foch had then told him: "If the German attack at Rheims succeeds we have lost the war."

(I was told of this remarkable conversation by an acquaintance who said it was historically accurate.—The Author.)

CHAPTER XVI

PEACE OVERTURES

A. Conferences on August 13 and 14, 1918, to discuss peace overtures through a neutral and Baron Burian's peace step.

B. The peace and armistice proposals and the revolution from above.

C. The revolution from below.

D. Enemy opinions on the end of the war.

A.

CONFERENCES ON AUGUST 13 AND 14, 1918, TO DISCUSS PEACE OVERTURES THROUGH A NEUTRAL AND BARON BURIAN'S PEACE STEP

Various versions of these conferences have gained currency. I repeat definitely that what was decided on the 14th was discussed and arranged on the 13th. On the 13th it was our duty to explain the military situation to the Imperial Chancellor and Secretary of State von Hintze. His Majesty the Kaiser was always kept fully informed. On the 14th His Majesty's decision was to be asked for. For the details I refer to my reply to the official White Book—*The Prelude to the Armistice, Vol. I. The Failure of the Neutral Peace Mediation.* [Berlin, 1919. Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn.]

I.

SIGNED MINUTES OF THE CONFERENCE AT GENERAL HEADQUARTERS ON AUGUST 14, 1918.

Present:

H.M. the Kaiser and King.
H.R.H.* the Crown Prince.
The Imperial Chancellor.
General Field-Marshal von Hindenburg.
General Ludendorff, First Quartermaster-General.
The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Adjutant-General von Plessen.
Chief of the Civil Cabinet von Berg.
Chief of the Military Cabinet Baron von Marschall.

The *Imperial Chancellor* described the domestic situation. General war weariness. Food inadequate. Shortage of clothing even worse. Suffrage reform.

General Ludendorff. Stricter discipline required at home. We must gather together all our strength at home with the utmost energy.† Lichnowsky must be punished.

The Foreign Secretary described the foreign situation. At the moment the enemy's determination and confidence in victory were greater than ever. To a certain extent this was explained by their recent military successes in the west, but the main reason was their original and ever-growing conviction that the allies, with their comparatively inexhaustible reserves of men, raw material and manufactures, must in time overthrow the allied Central Powers. In their view time was working for them. The longer the war lasted the sooner

* H.I.H. [The Author.]

† On August 13 and 14 I delivered myself very fully on the necessity of raising the *moral* of the nation, because our capacity for resistance at the front depended upon it. I refer also to the Chancellor's decree of August 29, 1918.

would the resources of the Central Powers in men, raw materials and manufactures give out, while the allies could look forward to increases under all three heads. Moreover, of late, the allies have begun to cherish the hope that they could help the factor of time by military success. So much for the enemy.

The neutrals were thoroughly tired of the war. They, too, were beginning to think that the Central Powers were doomed to defeat by the operation of time alone, though they would prefer a peace without victory for either side. Most of them favoured the victory of our enemies for sentimental reasons. But their principal concern was for the war to end, whatever that end might be. For that reason they were even prepared to help in defeating us. There was proof in the attitude of Spain towards our torpedoings, an attitude which presented us with the alternatives of war, or imposing restrictions on our submarine operations. This behaviour was all the more regrettable because other neutrals would follow suit when it became known.

As regards our allies. Austria declares—and our own information confirms her opinion—that she has reached the end of her resources, that she cannot hold out after the winter, and that even another winter campaign is more than doubtful.

Bulgaria is putting forward large demands for subsidies and the delivery of material, and is alleged to be largely incapable of further efforts owing to the exhaustion of her army.

Turkey has plunged into a campaign of murder and rapine in the Caucasus, is acting contrary to our interests, and opposes to our reproaches and warnings the well-known resistance of the oriental, especially when he is the weaker party. We have the choice of letting our allies go their own way or declaring ourselves ready to meet their extensive claims. In our position our choice is settled offhand.

The Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army has defined the military situation to the effect that we can no longer hope to break the will of our enemies by military operations, and that the object of our military efforts must now be gradually to paralyse the determination of our enemies by a strategic defensive. The political authorities accept this view of the great military leaders who have fought this war, and draw the inference that in a political sense also we are no longer in a position to break the will of our enemies, and are therefore compelled to bear the military situation in mind in deciding upon the political course we should take.

His Royal Highness the Crown Prince declared his agreement with all that General Ludendorff and the Secretary of State had said, and insisted that the home front must be kept together by stronger discipline.

His Majesty. The officers in charge of the Army Corps districts and the War Minister must keep better order at home. He would issue a fresh order on this matter to the Generals. The civil authorities must co-operate and enforce the law more strictly.

As regards recruiting there must be better combing-out. In Berlin there is still a large number of young men at large.

His Majesty agrees with the description of the foreign situation. But the enemy too is suffering. He has had a large number of men killed, and his industries are beginning to close down in consequence of the shortage of raw materials. Food, too, is scarce. The harvest in England is bad this year. Tonnage is getting less all the time *and it is possible that England will gradually begin to think of peace as the result of all these difficulties.*

His Majesty regards the summary of the political situation as accurate. We must find a suitable moment in which to come to an understanding with the enemy. The proper channel of communication was a neutral state. (His Majesty

named some of them.) The establishment of a propaganda committee was necessary in order to diminish the enemy's confidence in victory and raise that of the German nation. Rousing speeches must be made by leading statesmen or private individuals of repute. Men of varying capacities must be put on the committee, not merely officials. The Foreign Office must set its political course.

The Imperial Chancellor pressed for the strictest assertion of authority at home. As regards propaganda, a complete programme was already in existence and it had been thoroughly worked out.

As regards diplomacy, we must put out feelers for an understanding at a favourable opportunity. There would be such an opportunity after our next success in the west.

Field-Marshal von Hindenburg explained that we should succeed in maintaining ourselves on French soil and thus impose our wills on our enemies.*

The signatures follow:

H. 14/8.
L. 14/8.
HERTLING, 17/8.
VON H. 14/8.
WILHELM I. R.
VON B. 19/8.
WILHELM, Crown Prince.

A letter of August 17 from Count Hertling is appended:

"By way of supplementing the summary of the Secretary of State I take the liberty of adding the following to my remarks:

"1. I have agreed to get into touch with the highest judicial authorities in the Empire and Prussia at once and draw their

* In the original minutes this sentence of the Field-Marshal runs: F.-M. von H. "hopes" that we shall "still" succeed, etc. The change to the more definite form "explained that we should succeed" is from General Ludendorff's hand, judging by the handwriting and the pencil used.

attention officially to the extremely injurious consequences to our front of the enemy's efforts to give publicity to Prince Lichnowsky's memorandum, as this must undoubtedly have considerable influence on the formation of opinion on this matter.

"2. With regard to suffrage reform in Prussia I have said that the promise given by His Majesty the Kaiser and King must be kept and that on taking over the office of Imperial Chancellor I pledged myself expressly to carry out the obligation. The Government must do everything in its power to introduce franchise reform in Prussia. If it looked as if it lacked the necessary courage and power it would be deprived of all prestige and authority. What is involved is not merely the individual Minister but the Monarchy and dynasty, and these directly."

2.

Geheimrat von Berg and Field-Marshal von Hindenburg on the Conferences of August 13 and 14, 1918.

His Excellency von Berg—the only "neutral" present at both conferences—wrote on September 17, 1919:

"I took part in the conference on August 13, as well as the so-called Crown Council on August 14. The meeting on the first day was for the purpose of agreeing and deciding upon the measures to be taken in view of the military and political situation—foreign and home—between the Chief of the General Staff and the Imperial Chancellor and Foreign Secretary. I there gained the impression—to me a particularly agreeable one—that co-operation, which had left a good deal to be desired in times past, had been achieved; both sides understood one another, expressed their views frankly, and there was no lack of confidence. The result was, ac-

cording to the analysis of the Field-Marshal and General Ludendorff: 'The military situation is certainly not hopeless but has changed for the worse as our offensive has not attained its purpose and a defensive on hostile soil can at most bring about a gradual paralysation of the enemy's efforts.' It was clear that as a result we could not adhere to the war aims we had had in mind hitherto, and that we must begin to think of putting out peace feelers through some neutral Power. No one recommended a direct offer of peace to the enemy. To me, as a participant in this conference, it is inconceivable how Secretary of State von Hintze could have discovered any reason that day for threatening the Imperial Chancellor with his resignation. No conflict of opinion was revealed at the meeting, and if Secretary of State von Hintze had brought forward further demands he would have found the Field-Marshal and General Ludendorff willing listeners in any case. During the day I was able to tell His Majesty of the general unanimity of view. When Secretary of State von Hintze had the field to himself on the 14th, this was again with the full approval of the military leaders. His summary was the *résumé* of the discussion of the previous day, and therefore neither the Field-Marshal nor General Ludendorff had any reason to say anything further as agreement had been reached on that day and His Majesty was quite *au fait*.

"I summarize the matter thus: There was complete agreement that in view of the military situation as described by the Field-Marshal and General Ludendorff, as well as the domestic and foreign situation as seen by the Imperial Chancellor and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, peace negotiations must be opened with the enemy through the medium of a neutral Power, Holland. The war aims to which we should still adhere were not discussed in detail, but it was clear from the tone of the conference that we no longer anticipated the realization of our former hopes, and that the

Secretary of State must to all intents and purposes be given a free hand."

The Field-Marshal writes on September 20, 1919:

"Hanover,
"September 20, 1919.

"In connection with the article of the 'D. T. Z.' of September 14, 1919, No. 455, 'Secretary of State von Hintze's Mistake,' I have the following remarks to make:

"The meaning I have given to Herr von Hintze's expression at the Crown Council on August 14, 1918, 'The Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army had defined the military situation to the effect, etc.,' is the only meaning which in my view could be given, i.e., that by 'Chief of the General Staff' either the authority—I and General Ludendorff—or the person—I alone, and not the First Quartermaster-General—was referred to.

"In any case, on August 13 we had the same view of the situation. This is confirmed by the fact that Herr von Hintze only spoke of the 'Chief of the General Staff' on the 14th, and then of 'who,' not 'of the General.'

"At that time I could take no exception to the declarations of Herr von Hintze. As far as I was concerned the main thing was that at both conferences there was complete agreement between the political and military authorities, and that the discussions at the Crown Council took practically the same course as those in the conference of the 13th.

"I insist once more that we fully realize that the war must be brought to an end by diplomatic means.

(Signed) "VON HINDENBURG."



3.

LETTERS FROM MAJOR BARON VON DEM BUSCHE AND GENERAL VON EISENHART-ROTHE ON MY VIEW OF THE RESULT OF THE CONFERENCES OF AUGUST 13 AND 14, 1918.

(1) Major Baron von dem Busche writes:

"G.H.Q.,
"Wilhelmshohe,
"December 28, 1918.

"At the beginning of September (September 2, 1918.—The Author), I had an intimate and long conversation on the situation with General Ludendorff at Avesnes.

"When at the end of my explanation I drew the inference that it was time to take steps with a view to initiating peace negotiations, General Ludendorff used these words:

"'That is exactly my opinion. During the short stay of the Foreign Secretary at G.H.Q. I left him in no doubt about the military situation, and asked him to begin negotiations for peace at once.'"

(2) General von Eisenhart-Rothe, Intendant-General of the Field Army during the war, and as such attached to G.H.Q., writes on August 12, 1919:

"Will Your Excellency be so good as to allow me to make a small contribution, in the interests of truth, to one of the many questions which have been broached in the White Book on the preliminaries to the peace negotiations.

"According to the White Book everyone not conversant with the true course of affairs must gain the impression that at the conference under His Majesty's presidency the then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had received instructions to open negotiations for peace only after another German military success in the west.

"Quite apart from the fact that, if that were so, any moderately rational individual would regard the whole

attitude of the Supreme Command and even the Imperial Chancellor at that time as incomprehensible, obscure, contradictory and illogical, and apart from the fact that the agreement with that attitude of Secretary of State von Hintze, who was fully informed of the situation, would deserve to be described as more than inexcusable, I personally see an absolute objection to the version of the White Book in the conversation which Your Excellency had with me at the end of September, 1918.

"Your Excellency then said to me: 'On August 13 and 14, by agreement with the Field-Marshal, I told the Imperial Chancellor and Secretary of State von Hintze that we were no longer in a position to bring the war to a victorious conclusion in a military sense, as we had hoped hitherto. It would therefore be necessary to make overtures for peace through a neutral country. His Majesty had proposed the Queen of Holland, and she was said to be agreeable.'

"In reply to my question, which revealed more than astonishment, why nothing further had been done or accomplished in that direction, Your Excellency expressed the opinion that the explanation was the clumsy machinery of the Foreign Office. 'I will not blame the Secretary of State.'

"I admired your forbearance.

"At this moment, when Your Excellency's attitude is described in other terms, permit me to remind you of this conversation and offer myself as a witness to the truth. Of course, I cannot guarantee the exact words used in the conversation, but in substance it was exactly as I have given it.

"It is confirmed by an expression which Your Excellency used in August, 1918 (although for other reasons than I then realized), when I referred to my anxieties about supplies for the coming winter. 'Don't be too anxious; the war will not last out this year.'

"His Excellency von Berg, then Chief of His Majesty's Cabinet, used a similar expression about the same time.

"I was thus bound to assume that we had succeeded in opening negotiations with England, a course which Your Excellency had always desired, as I had known since January, 1918. In this connection I can recall the effort which was made about this time at the suggestion of His Excellency von Braun,* with Your Excellency's approval, through the medium of a neutral to put representatives of trade and industry well known in England in touch with the City of London. These efforts were nipped in the bud owing to inadequate support from the Foreign Office or the neutral envoys in question.

"But after the conversation in September it was clear to me that what Your Excellency and Herr von Berg had in mind was the instructions given to Secretary of State von Hintze.

(Signed) "VON EISENHART."

4.

STATEMENT BY SECRETARY OF STATE VON HINTZE ON THE CONFERENCE AT SPA.

Deputy Count von Westarp writes:

"Berlin,
"March 18, 1919.

"I have the honour of informing Your Excellency, with reference to our conference, that according to my notes the following was the course of the events in August and September, 1918, to which Your Excellency refers. At the party conference of August 21, 1918,† His Excellency von Hintze emphasized in a report which he had drawn up on the latest decisions of G.H.Q. that the recent military

* Under Secretary of State in the War Food Office.

† Under the chairmanship of Vice-Chancellor von Payer. [The Author.]

successes of the enemy had enormously increased their determination to win as well as their confidence, so that they adhered to their aim of overthrowing Germany completely. Our failures had also had a very great effect, though neither of these phenomena were entirely justified by the facts. The enemy's success had not actually brought him any nearer to his goal. In the Field-Marshal's opinion our temporary misfortunes had given the enemy no right to assume that he would succeed in breaking our will. We too had a right to anticipate the possibility of victories. There was no military reason for the great depression which had been revealed among us. We had no reason to say that we had doubts about a peace which would both be honourable to us and also secure our future.

"Then His Excellency von Hintze went direct to the difficulties of the political situation and the feebleness of our allies. In view of these political and military considerations all the high authorities had come to the following conclusion: We have decided to put out feelers with a view of getting into touch with our enemies and finding out what they really concede and want, and on our side we will not reject any feelers which come from the other party. We are therefore trying to negotiate, and this is done in full confidence that we shall maintain our military front on hostile soil and even win further victories, so that we can successfully throw our *moral* into the scale for an 'acceptable and honourable peace which shall secure our future.' There must be no direct offer of peace, but no stone must be left unturned to secure an exchange of opinions. The appropriate decisions had already been taken. He could not give us further details.

"On August 23 I was received alone by His Excellency von Hintze. With no one else there he described the situation in more serious terms than at the party conference. The more serious tone applied rather to the political than the military situation. With regard to the latter, as I told him,

I thought I knew the views of the Supreme Command from the other side, and that they no longer reckoned on the possibility of our being in a position in the course of 1918 to break the will of our enemies by decisive blows on land, but on the other hand we should be able to maintain our front during 1918 on hostile soil, though perhaps not the existing front. I said I hoped that the submarine campaign combined with victorious defence on land would bring us to our goal. Without examining the basis of my hopes more closely His Excellency von Hintze gave me certain information about our allies, particularly the coming peace overtures by Austria which he had strongly opposed. He confirmed the communication that we intended to open negotiations through the medium of a neutral.

"I could believe that he was anxious to exploit the Belgian question for everything that could be got out of it, but he left me in no doubt—and indeed I seemed to remember that he invoked the authority of Your Excellency—that he regarded the prospects of permanent guarantees in Belgium as small. He agreed with me entirely that it was just in this situation that it was vital to reveal no weaknesses to the outside world, but to maintain absolute firmness in the nation. So far from having any objections he expressly emphasized his wish that we Conservatives and the Pan-Germans should maintain and adhere to our standpoint with regard to Belgium; he said that the situation gave us no reason to abandon our belief in the necessity of guarantees in Belgium. He wished the movement to be kept in the public eye.

"On September 16 Count Hertling told me personally and privately that the peace proposals of September 14 of Count Burian, of which he thoroughly disapproved, had crossed his intention of trying to get into touch through Holland, the course which had been agreed upon at the conferences at Spa. The public offer of peace by Austria had now barred that course to us for weeks. But, once it had

been made, he said Your Excellency had also agreed that we must not adopt an openly hostile attitude.

"I leave it entirely to Your Excellency's discretion to make what use you think fit of this letter. I regard myself as released from the obligation of silence about these events.

(Signed) "COUNT VON WESTARP."

Deputy Stresemann on March 23, 1919, writes as follows in the "Deutsche Stimmen" of that day:

"On August 21 there was a conference at the Ministry of the Interior in which I think even the political leaders in the Empire came to the conclusion that the war could not now be won and must be ended as soon as possible. At that conference, in which the party leaders Ebert, Groeber, Westarp, Wiemer and Stresemann took part, as well as Vice-Chancellor von Payer, Secretary of State von Hintze, their Excellencies Kriege and Lewald and *Ministerialdirektor* Deutelmoser, Herr von Hintze delivered a speech on the political situation which could only be described as extremely serious. Referring directly to conferences at G.H.Q., Herr von Hintze said that the Entente were intoxicated with victory and that our failures were frankly admitted at Headquarters. Further, Austria was thoroughly exhausted and Bulgaria very tired of the war. In view of the situation it was necessary to put out feelers for peace and welcome any attempt by the enemy to establish contact. With that end in view decisions had already been taken and our minds made up.

"During the ensuing debate Herr von Hintze came back to this phrase when a doubt was expressed by one of the party leaders as to the utility of peace overtures of the kind which had already been revealed in the words of the Secretary of State. He insisted that we must give the matter careful consideration and proceed very cautiously, especially as the reports of our spies revealed the enemy's determination to destroy us. But once more the Secretary of State repeated

his words about accepting approaches and putting out feelers, and all those present were strongly under the impression that in view of the difficulties of the military and political situation preparations were being made for peace overtures by Germany, perhaps through the medium of a neutral Power. And this even if the Secretary of State, who chose his words so carefully, had not expressly said, 'Decisions have already been taken and our minds made up.'"

5.

My Attitude to the Belgian Question.

Count Limburg-Stirum* gives the following account on July 30, 1919.

"At the end of August, 1918, His Excellency von Payer and I travelled at night from Berlin to Spa, where the Imperial Chancellor was still in residence. In the afternoon of the day of our arrival the draft of a declaration *re* Belgium, to be made very shortly by some German statesman, was drawn up by the Imperial Chancellor and Herr von Payer. That night Herr von Payer and I went to Avesnes. The following morning, soon after our arrival, von Payer discussed this draft with His Excellency Ludendorff in my presence.

"His Excellency Ludendorff took objection to the wording of the draft and said that before a final decision was given he must consult with the Field-Marshal. The discussion lasted about an hour, and when it was over von Payer, Lieutenant-Colonel Nicolai and I went to the neighbourhood of St. Quentin and returned about seven o'clock.

"In the course of the evening Ludendorff called me to him and gave me the following note, which was written in his own hand but not signed.

"'Counter-proposal: England alleges that she only went to war on account of Belgium. She is pursuing other objects—

* Representative of the Imperial Chancellor at Main Headquarters.

the political and economic destruction of Germany. She will not realize that that involves her own destruction.

" ' The Imperial Chancellor has made his position perfectly clear with regard to Belgium. On the conclusion of peace we are willing, without conditions or reserve, to restore to Belgium her complete independence, on the assumption that no other State shall be in a better position in a political, military or economic sense. We do not doubt that we shall be able to come to an understanding with Belgium over the details—even the question of the Flemings—which will do justice to the interests of both sides and promote peace. In return we demand the return of our colonies and the evacuation of Calais by England. On these points there is complete agreement between the Government and the Supreme Command.'

" His Excellency Ludendorff gave me this note, adding that none of his colleagues had any knowledge of his counter-proposal.

" Herr von Payer was very pleased when he heard about this, and on our way back to Spa he said to me, ' My journey has not been in vain. It is possible that some day we shall look back on this journey as an event of world history. It will bring peace.'

" At Spa a fresh draft was worked out by the Imperial Chancellor and Herr von Payer. This was approved by the Supreme Command and was to be published in a speech by some German minister in the immediate future. Herr von Payer made the speech himself at a meeting in Wurtemberg. There was never any question of Count Hertling's issuing the declaration.

" In the middle of August, 1918, I spoke to Colonel Haeften in the same sense.

" At that time I knew nothing of the mission of Count Törring. I did not hear of it until the summer of 1919."

6.

My Attitude on the Polish Question.

Secretary of State von Hintze communicated with Main Headquarters on the Polish question on August 28. He wired as follows:

"Count . . . . on instructions from . . . . told me in strict confidence that during the negotiations in Vienna Count Burian had expressed to the Polish leaders his dissatisfaction that at the conferences at Main Headquarters the Austro-Polish solution was hardly ever mentioned now, but only the question of the candidature of the Archduke Karl Stephan. To this he had replied that he must first hear the wishes of the Poles with regard to this question. In dealing with the Poles Count Burian had stood by the Austro-Polish solution and insisted on its superiority. He had proposed a three-party conference between Germany, Austria and Poland.

"Count . . . . wished to have a better idea of what we were prepared to offer the Poles if the 'candidate' solution were accepted.* He maintained, and with justice, that Warsaw should know this in order to be able to oppose the agitation for the Austro-Polish solution. With regard to the district of Cholm he defined his wishes thus:

"Poland wants the Pripet–Bug line, which will be fixed by a mixed commission. On this point Germany must support Poland.

"The White Russian region north of Congress Poland the Poles wish to keep in order to have a common frontier with Russia. As regards the town of Vilna . . . . in agreement with . . . . puts forward the following formula:

"The town of Vilna and the four adjoining districts shall have the right to determine for themselves to which State

* The solution understood here is that on which His Majesty had decided in the middle of August and which gave the Poles a ruler of their own choice.

they shall belong. A mixed commission of Germans, Poles and Lithuanians shall exercise control in this matter.

"I left Count . . . . in no doubt that if the Austro-Polish solution were accepted we must insist on extensive frontier rectifications, including the whole of the Polish coal basin. I reserved my answer with regard to the other question. In reply to my question about other candidates for the throne . . . . mentioned, though somewhat tentatively, a Saxon prince. He wants to reserve a final decision until his return from Warsaw; in short . . . . said:

"His friends wished to make up their minds on the question: Warsaw–Vilna, or Vilna–Warsaw–Cracow. With regard to the Cholm district, I think that on the basis of this and the proposals of the Ukrainian Minister-President, Lisogub, we could arrive at an agreement which would leave neither the Ukrainians nor the Poles entirely dissatisfied. In any case the whole of the line of the Bug could not be assigned to Poland as the Austrians proposed.

"As regards Vilna, this will always remain a foreign body in Lithuania. To give it back to the Russians would have the disadvantage that the Russian frontier would again be perilously near to ours. Sooner or later Russia would be inspired by the natural ambition to obtain a larger protective belt for a town quite close to the frontier. Further, there is the danger that the assignment of Vilna to Russia would unite the Lithuanians and Poles against Germany in their common disappointment at the loss of this town. But even if it is not wise to give Vilna to Poland at this stage it might be possible to offer them the prospect of our accepting the formula they have proposed, provided that certain conditions, more particularly the military convention, are carried out to our complete satisfaction."

To this Main Headquarters replied on August 31 in the following terms:

"As regards the Polish question, I must insist on my point

of view that its settlement, by agreement with the Poles, is extremely desirable before the opening of negotiations in the west. I can therefore give my sanction to the Warsaw-Vilna solution on condition that it will give us definite guarantees of the close association of Poland with Germany which will then be absolutely necessary, and further that no obstacles will be placed in the way of commercial intercourse. (An alliance with military, railway, post and telegraph and economic conventions. The forest of Bialowies, with the small advanced zone required, to be a Prussian crown land. Goods in transit to be free of duty. Part of our war debt to be taken over.)

"It would be no disadvantage for the development of Lithuania if it lost districts which had a preponderance of Poles. The reply of the Imperial Chancellor to the declaration of the Regional Council of December 11, 1917, had certainly promised Vilna to Lithuania. (Lithuania was recognized as a free and independent State on the basis of the decisions referred to, i.e., with Vilna as its capital.) However, in view of the recent attitude of the Regional Council, we could be released from this promise if we were prepared for conflict. In any case, the independence of a diminished Lithuanian State could only become possible by personal union with the Empire or, better, with Prussia. We must expect disorders in Lithuania and take steps to avert them in good time, i.e., before the latest decision is announced.

"The suggestion put forward by . . . of a plebiscite seems to be unacceptable as it would lead to furious agitation and create a precedent which might have incalculable consequences. It might show the Poles the way to make claims to other alleged Polish districts on the same ground. I regard some protection against such claims as absolutely necessary, as I see a great danger in this seizure of a part of Lithuania by Poland—a seizure which might be followed by facile claims to other portions. It will therefore be necessary in the treaty

of alliance to demand an express guarantee that Poland will abandon all claims to Lithuania and will neither permit nor promote any pro-Polish agitation in the German Empire and Lithuania.

"I am sending to your Excellency a map showing a frontier line based on the Warsaw–Vilna solution.

"If a Greater Lithuania no longer serves the purpose of a safe concentration-area, the bridge-heads at Ostrolenka, Lomza and Osowiec are an indispensable military requirement, to the acceptance of which I anticipate no special difficulties.

"I should be only too glad if the agreement with regard to the Polish-Ukrainian frontier, of which Your Excellency has hopes, materializes. I am sending Your Excellency proposals for the frontier line from a military point of view as soon as the authorities concerned have made known their views.

"With a view to preventing the Austro-Polish solution for Poland I must ask Your Excellency to see that the frontier zones we demand for military reasons should be as broad as possible.

"This is in case Your Excellency has not already arranged with Poland or Austria-Hungary for the zones as laid down in the memorandum of July 5, 1918. Those zones were the minimum that would meet military requirements. Moreover, there must be no doubt that if the Austro-Polish solution be adopted Poland must not have a common frontier with Russia, but be separated from her by Lithuania.

(Signed) "P. p. LUDENDORFF."

7.

HERR VON HINTZE ON THE POSSIBILITIES OF NEUTRAL MEDIATION.

In the "Frankfurter Zeitung" of July 31, 1919, Herr von Hintze writes:

"On August 14 I was empowered to invoke the mediation of Holland, when a success on the western front had restored

our military situation. Both the Imperial Chancellor and the Supreme Command told me expressly and emphatically that no peace overtures must be made during the period of military checkmate. On the next day the Emperor Karl paid a visit to General Headquarters. He came with the draft of the Burian note addressed 'to the world.' This general appeal was repudiated both by the Supreme Command and the Imperial Chancellor as an unsuitable course, and the conventional method—mediation by a neutral Power—was proposed instead. . . . In addition to the Dutch scheme I negotiated with Hohenlohe for mediation by the King of Spain, which he had suggested. Our diplomatic efforts were directed to inducing Austria-Hungary to stop crying for help and associate herself with us in our proposed Dutch *démarche*. At the end of August, 1918, I discussed mediation by Holland with the Dutch Ambassador, Baron Gevers, and found him ready and willing. I told Hohenlohe of this the same day (August 28 or 29, if I remember rightly) and emphasized the Ambassador's willingness to Baron Burian."

8.

THE IMPERIAL CHANCELLOR, COUNT VON HERTLING, AT THE MEETING OF THE PRUSSIAN CABINET ON SEPTEMBER 3, 1918.

The Minister-President first of all thanked the Ministers of State for their good wishes for his seventy-fifth birthday as well as their gift of flowers.

Then he discussed the immediate political situation, which he said was closely bound up with the military situation. He hoped that the War Minister would be able to give further details about the latter.

All leading men shared a desire that every feasible course should be taken which might lead to an understanding with

the enemy. A direct offer of peace could not and must not be made, as it would only be contemptuously rejected by our enemies. On the other hand, the threads of peace must be spun and every chance seized which might bring us to our goal, if possible through a neutral or some suitable medium. We must say to the enemy something like this: "You see you cannot conquer us. There can be no doubt that in the war which has been forced upon her Germany will maintain her right to existence and her place in the sun, but we are alway ready to conclude an honourable peace, and this has been emphasized repeatedly and unambiguously by the German Government in the past."

At His Majesty the Kaiser's command an exact programme was being drawn up of the individual conditions of peace to be put forward. The course of action he had just described was agreed upon at the conferences which had taken place under His Majesty's presidency at Spa, at which the Crown Prince was present as well as Generals von Hindenburg and Ludendorff. At these conferences complete unanimity of view was secured. The position was certainly complicated by the need for peace at any price which is making itself felt more and more in Austria-Hungary. The Austro-Hungarian Government had told him that they wished to inform all their enemies of their readiness to make peace. It is true that he had succeeded in averting so fatal a step, but the desire to take that course would no doubt again be expressed more forcibly in Austria-Hungary. It was for that very reason that Secretary of State von Hintze had just gone to Vienna and was therefore, to his personal regret, unable to take part in this day's meeting.

There was no doubt that at the present moment our *moral* at home was bad, and for that reason we too must make serious efforts to get out of the war with honour. At the conferences referred to at Spa the question had been discussed how the present depression, which was not justified by the

military situation as such, could be successfully fought. It was our business to restore the confidence of the civil population and paralyse the evil reaction of the front on the public, and *vice versâ*, which was obvious on all sides. A special organization, which was to carry on extensive propaganda at home and abroad, was to be attached to the Foreign Office and placed under the authority of Secretary of State von Hintze. It had already started on its work and produced good results.

9.

Conference with Secretary of State von Hintze at Spa on September 10.

Immediately after August 8 General von Cramon at the Austro-Hungarian headquarters had reported the growing war weariness of Austria-Hungary.

On August 14 and 15 Baron Burian, who was then present at Spa, represented his desire to make an appeal for peace to all countries involved in the war, while the Imperial Chancellor adhered to the standpoint of mediation by a neutral. The discussion between the German and Austro-Hungarian Governments dragged on without leading to any definite result.

At the beginning of September—not on September 9 only, as I understood for a time—Main Headquarters heard of this intention.

On September 7 General von Cramon, cabling on a number of matters, concluded with this question:

"3. About when does Main Headquarters think the suggestion of conferences with a view to peace negotiations will become possible and expedient?"

The following reply was immediately returned:

"Am seeing Hintze and cannot reply to your last question until I have discussed the matter.

(Signed) "von Hindenburg."

The meeting took place on September 10. The following telegram was then sent to General von Cramon:

"Reference 5P Sec. Pers. of 7/9. After discussion with His Excellency von Hintze my reply to your third point is as follows:

"I cannot approve Austria-Hungary's intention to send proposed note. I regard that step as disastrous for our army in the west but I can immediately give my consent to mediation of a neutral Power with a view to the initiation of conversations.

(Signed) "VON HINDENBURG."

On September 11, 1918, Secretary of State von Hintze telegraphed to the Foreign Office in Berlin:

"His Majesty and Main Headquarters have agreed to immediate action by a neutral. Please communicate this by wire to our Ambassador at Vienna, instructing him to inform the Austro-Hungarian Government and ask their participation or approval. Repeat same to our Ambassador at Sofia and Count Bernstorff and Talaat Pasha. Please inform Chancellor.

(Signed) "HINTZE."

10.

ON SEPTEMBER 14 COUNT BURIAN TOOK SEPARATE STEPS AND ISSUED HIS NOTE TO ALL THE BELLIGERENTS.

An objective conscientious examination of the situation of all the belligerent States no longer leaves doubt that all peoples, on whatever side they may be fighting, long for a speedy end to the bloody struggle. Despite this natural and comprehensible desire for peace, it has not so far been possible

to create those preliminary conditions calculated to bring peace efforts nearer realization and to bridge the gap which at present still separates the belligerents from one another.

More effective ways and means must therefore be considered whereby the responsible factors of all countries can be offered an opportunity to investigate the present possibilities of an understanding. The first step which Austria-Hungary in accordance with her allies undertook on December 12, 1916, for bringing about peace did not lead to the end hoped for. The grounds for this lay assuredly in the situation at that time. In order to maintain their people's war spirit, which was steadily declining, the allied governments had by severest means suppressed even any discussion of the peace idea, and so it came about that the ground for a peaceable understanding was not properly prepared. The natural transition from the wildest war agitation to conciliatoriness was lacking.

It would, however, be wrong to believe that the peace step we then took was entirely without result. Its fruits, however, consist of the phenomenon, which is not to be overlooked, that the peace question has not since vanished from the order of the day; and if, too, the pertinent discussions which were carried on before the tribunal of public opinion are at the same time proof of the not slight differences which to-day still separate the warring Powers in their conception of peace conditions, nevertheless an atmosphere has been formed which no longer excludes discussion of the peace problem.

Without exaggerated optimism, at least as much may assuredly be deducted from the utterances of responsible statesmen that the desire to reach an understanding and not to decide war exclusively by force of arms is also beginning gradually to penetrate into the allied States, save for some exceptions of blinded war agitators, which are certainly not to be estimated lightly.

The Austro-Hungarian Government is conscious that after

the deep convulsions which have been caused in the life of peoples by the devastating effects of the world-war it will not be possible to re-establish the tottering world-order at a single stroke. The path that leads to the restoration of peaceful relations between the peoples separated by hatred and embitterment is toilsome and wearisome, yet it is our duty to tread this path—the path of negotiations—and, if there are still such responsible factors as desire to overcome their opponent by military means and to force the will of victory upon him, there can, nevertheless, be no longer any doubt that this aim, assuming even that it is attainable, would first necessitate a further bloody and protracted struggle.

But even a later victorious peace will no longer be able to make good the consequences of such a policy, consequences which will be fatal to all the States and peoples of Europe. Only a peace which could righteously adjust the still divergent conceptions of the opponents would be the peace desired by all the peoples. With this consciousness, and unswervingly endeavouring to labour in the interest of peace, the Austro-Hungarian Government now again comes forward with a suggestion with the object of bringing about a direct discussion between the enemy Powers.

The earnest will to peace of broad classes of the population of all the States who are jointly suffering through the war, the indisputable *rapprochement* in individual controversial questions, as well as the more conciliatory atmosphere that is general, seem to the Austro-Hungarian Government to give a certain guarantee that a fresh step in the interests of peace, which also takes account of past experiences in this domain, might at the present moment offer a possibility of success.

The Austro-Hungarian Government has, therefore, resolved to point out to all belligerents, friend and foe, a path considered practicable by it, and to propose to them jointly to examine in a free exchange of views whether those pre-requisites exist which make the speedy inauguration of peace

negotiations appear promising. To this end the Austro-Hungarian Government has to-day invited the governments of all belligerent States to a confidential and non-binding discussion at a neutral meeting-place, and has addressed to them a note drawn up in this sense. This step has been brought to the knowledge of the Holy See in a special note.

Furthermore, the governments of neutral States have been also acquainted with the *démarche*. The constant and close accord which exists between the four allied Powers warrants the assumption that the allies of Austria-Hungary, to whom the proposal in the same manner is being sent, share the views developed in the note.

The peace offer which the Powers of the Quadruple Alliance addressed to their opponents on December 12, 1916, and whose conciliatory and basic ideas they have never given up, signifies, despite the rejection which it experienced, an important stage in the history of this war. In contrast to the first two and a half years of the war, the question of peace has from that moment stood in the centre of European and, indeed, of world discussion, and has since occupied and dominated it in ever increasing measure.

Almost all the belligerent States have in turn again and again expressed themselves on the question of peace and its pre-requisites and conditions. The line of development of these discussions, however, has not been uniform and steady. The basic standpoint has changed under the influence of the military and political position, and hitherto at any rate it has not led to a tangible and practicably utilizable general result. It is true that, independent of all these oscillations, it can be stated that the distance between the conceptions of the two sides has on the whole grown somewhat less; that despite the indisputable continuance of decided and hitherto unbridged differences, a partial turning from many of the extremest concrete war aims is visible, and a certain agreement relative to the general basic principles of a world peace manifesto

itself. In both camps there is undoubtedly observable in broad classes of the population a growth of the will to peace and understanding.

Moreover, a comparison of the reception of the peace proposal of the Powers of the Quadruple Alliance by their opponents with later utterances of responsible statesmen of the latter, as well as of non-responsible but, in a political respect, by no means uninfluential personalities, confirms this impression. Whilst, for example, the Allies' reply to President Wilson made demands which amounted to the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary, a diminution and profound internal transformation of the German Empire, and the destruction of Turkey's European ownership, these demands, whose realization was based on the supposition of overwhelming victory, were later modified in many declarations of official Entente quarters, or in part dropped.

Thus, in a declaration made in the British House of Commons about a year ago, Mr. Balfour expressly recognized that Austria-Hungary must itself solve its internal problems, and that no one could impose a constitution upon Germany from outside. Mr. Lloyd George declared at the beginning of this year that it was not among the Allies' war aims to partition Austria-Hungary, to rob the Ottoman Empire of its Turkish provinces, and to reform Germany internally. It may also be considered symptomatic that in December, 1917, Mr. Balfour categorically repudiated the assumption that British policy had ever engaged itself for the creation of an independent State out of territories on the left bank of the Rhine.

The declarations of the Central Powers leave no doubt that they are only waging a war of defence for the integrity and security of their territories. Far more outspoken than in the domain of concrete war aims, there has proceeded a *rapprochement* of conceptions regarding those guiding lines upon the basis of which peace shall be concluded and the future order of

Europe and the world be built up. In this direction President Wilson, in his speeches of February 12 and July 4 this year, has formulated principles which did not encounter contradiction on the part of his allies, and whose far-going application is likely to meet with no objection also on the part of the Powers of the Quadruple Alliance, presupposing that this application is general and reconcilable with the vital interests of the States concerned. It is true, it must be remembered, that an agreement on general principles does not suffice, but that it is further a matter of reaching an accord on their interpretation, and their application to individual concrete war and peace questions.

For an unprejudiced observer there can be no doubt that in all belligerent States, without exception, the desire for a peace of understanding has been enormously strengthened, that the conviction is increasingly spreading that a further continuance of the bloody struggle must transform Europe into ruins and a state of exhaustion that will lame its development for decades to come, and this without any guarantee of at the same time bringing about that decision by arms which has been vainly striven after by both sides in four years full of enormous sacrifices, sufferings, and exertions.

In what way and in what manner, however, can the way be paved for an understanding and an understanding be finally attained? Is there any serious prospect whatever of reaching this aim by continuing discussion of the peace problem in the way hitherto followed? We have not the courage to answer the latter question in the affirmative. Discussion from one public tribune to another, as has hitherto taken place between the statesmen of the various countries, was really only a series of monologues. It lacked, above all, directness. Speech and counter-speech did not fit into each other. The speakers spoke over one another's heads.

On the other hand, it was the publicity and ground of these discussions which robbed them of the possibility of

fruitful progress. In all public statements of this nature a form of eloquence is used which reckons with effect at great distance and effect on the masses. Consciously or unconsciously, however, one thereby increases the distance of the opponent's conception and produces misunderstandings which take root and are not removed, and makes a frank and simple exchange of ideas more difficult. Every pronouncement of leading statesmen, directly after its delivery and before authoritative quarters of the opposite side can reply to it, is made the subject of passionate or exaggerated discussion on the part of irresponsible elements, but anxiety lest they should endanger the interests of their prosecution of the war by unfavourably influencing feeling at home and prematurely betray their own ultimate intentions causes also responsible statesmen themselves to strike a higher tone and stubbornly adhere to extreme standpoints.

If, therefore, an attempt is to be made to see whether a basis exists for an understanding calculated to avert from Europe the catastrophe of a suicidal continuation of the struggle, then in any case another method should be chosen which renders possible direct verbal discussion between the representatives of the Governments, and only between them. The opposing conceptions of individual belligerent States would likewise have to form the subject of such a discussion and mutual enlightenment, as well as the general principles that shall serve as a basis for peace and the future relations of States to one another, and regarding which, in the first place, agreement can be sought with a prospect of success. As soon as an agreement was reached on fundamental principles an attempt would have to be made in the course of the discussions concretely to apply them to individual peace questions, and thereby to bring about their solution.

We venture to hope that there will be no objection on the part of any of the belligerents to such an exchange of views. War actions would experience no interruption. The dis-

cussions, too, would only go so far as they were considered by the participants to offer prospects of success. No disadvantages could arise therefrom for the States represented. Far from being harmful, such an exchange of views could only be useful for the cause of peace. What the first time does not succeed can be repeated, and what has already been done has, perhaps, at least contributed to the clarification of views. Mountains of old misunderstandings might be removed, and many new things perceived. Streams of pent-up human kindness would be released, in whose warmth everything essential would remain, and, on the other hand, much that is antagonistic and to which excessive importance is still attributed would disappear. According to our conviction, all the belligerents owe it to humanity jointly to examine whether now, after so many years of a costly but undecided struggle, whose entire course points to an understanding, it is possible to make an end to the terrible struggle.

The Royal and Imperial Government would like, therefore, to propose to the governments of all belligerent States to send delegates to a confidential and non-binding discussion on basic principles for the conclusion of peace in a place in a neutral country, and at a near date, which would have to be agreed on—the delegates who are appointed to make known to one another the conception of their Governments regarding those principles, to receive analogous communications, and to request and give frank and candid explanations on all those points which need to be precisely defined.

The Royal and Imperial Government has the honour to request the Government of ——, through the kind mediation of your Excellency, to bring this communication to the knowledge of the Government of ——.

GERMANY'S ATTITUDE TO THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN NOTE

(Semi-official announcement.)

Berlin, September, 1918.

The "Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung" says:

"The echo which the Austro-Hungarian note to the Governments of all the Powers (published yesterday) has found in the German Press is a further proof of that genuine readiness of our people to make peace which has so often been revealed. It is plain on all sides that the step taken by our ally is not only fully understood in Germany but an expression of the spirit in which, from the very outset, we have waged this common struggle for the future welfare of the allied empires and peoples. If doubts had been raised in the most varied quarters as to the success of this step of our allies, these are based on the previous experiences of ourselves or of our ally in every case in which we have attempted to bring about an understanding and hasten the end of the war, which is tearing Europe to pieces, by finding the path to concord. The justification for those doubts is patent. But it goes without saying that it has no effect whatever on the willingness of the German Government to participate forthwith and with the best will in the world in the conversations which are intended to follow the step taken by Austria-Hungary."

Main Headquarters has heard nothing further of the idea of neutral mediation. In my opinion it was always very difficult of realization in view of the enemy's determination to destroy us. In April, 1919, Herr von Hintze told me that it would possibly have been not so difficult as we thought. (See No. 7 on page 598.) In the same way the official "Preliminaries to the Armistice" says that on August 29 if

we had expressed a wish for mediation by a neutral Power it would have had a favourable reception.*

The official White Book makes Austria responsible for hindering this mediation.

Baron Burian's note was a complete failure.

On September 27 Wilson published the principles of his League of Nations without making any reference whatever to Burian's note.

B.

THE PEACE AND ARMISTICE PROPOSALS AND THE REVOLUTION FROM ABOVE

1.

As early as September 2 the Bulgarian General Gantscheff reported to Sofia:

"With reference to Burian's peace proposals, Rosenberg told me the following to-day at the German Foreign Office: 'The German Government thinks that the suggestion should not be addressed to all the countries at war, and in any case not publicly but secretly through diplomatic channels . . . in fact only to Wilson. The Germans are prepared to satisfy Wilson's ambition of playing the leading part in bringing about negotiations. They are ready to go to a conference at Washington.'"

The Foreign Office never said anything of that kind to the Supreme Command.

2.

EXTRACTS FROM THE "PRELIMINARIES TO THE ARMISTICE."

Berlin, September 28, 1918.

A vital condition precedent to the opening of peace negotiations is the immediate formation of a new Government

* In the popular edition of the official White Book this statement is not to be found! [The Author.]

on a broad national basis on the unfettered initiative of His Majesty the Kaiser.* For this purpose it is desirable that if possible a telegram should be sent to Berlin accepting Count Hertling's offer to resign and instructing Vice-Chancellor von Payer to make proposals to the Kaiser both with regard to the choice of a new Chancellor and the composition of the new Government. The new Cabinet must concentrate all the resources of the nation on the broadest national basis and make them available for the defence of the Fatherland. With a view to attaining that object and at the express desire of the Kaiser the Vice-Chancellor must consult the Speaker of the Reichstag and the party leaders, and work out his proposals in the closest co-operation with the representatives of the nation.

The new Government thus formed will approach President Wilson at a given moment with the request:

> To initiate steps for peace and for that purpose invite all parties to the conflict to send plenipotentiaries to Washington.

In accordance with the desire of our military authorities the President would be requested simultaneously to invite the warring parties to conclude an immediate armistice. Our suggestion to Mr. Wilson will be accompanied by a declaration that Germany, and if need be the Quadruple Alliance, *would be ready to accept the programme of the President's well-known fourteen points as the basis of negotiations.*

We must recommend that our communication should be sent to Mr. Wilson by the most direct way and the question of open or secret action left to his discretion. The most effective course would be for one of the Imperial Ambassadors in a neutral capital to be instructed to hand the communication in writing to his American colleague. The choice of the neutral country must be dependent upon the suitability of the American representative we have in mind.

* The same views held the field in Vienna and Constantinople. Bulgaria's defection from the Quadruple Alliance was already an accomplished fact. [The Author.]

For that purpose a secret telegraphic inquiry is being sent to-day to the different Imperial Ambassadors.

Note: Our intention of proposing an armistice and peace was not yet known in Berlin.

3.

The Field-Marshal and I were not aware of the trend of opinion in Berlin when we decided upon an armistice and peace proposals in the evening of September 28. For the details I must refer to my reply to the official White Book, "Preliminaries to the Armistice," Vol. II.

Here I will only repeat that we needed further help from the Homeland if we were to hold our own. This was only possible if it was made clear to the German people that they were faced with the prospect of a peace of violence, not of reconciliation. Our proposals for an armistice and peace must soon show us where we stood. In view of the position of the army, engaged in a desperate struggle, we could not take the responsibility for the loss of time. If we had been offered a peace which allowed us to live, even if it involved heavy sacrifices, we ought to have accepted it. But such a peace as we had to expect after the middle of October *we could never accept!* If the enemy realized that he could only recover from his own great sacrifices if he displayed a certain spirit of reconciliation towards his foe, who was fighting desperately and prolonging the war, we could have hoped for a peace which left us life and honour.

Early on the 29th the conference with Secretary of State von Hintze took place. The Secretary adopted the views set forth in Sections 1 and 2. The Field-Marshal and I gave our opinions and emphasized the necessity of fighting on if we were only offered a peace involving dishonour or dismemberment.

In reply to my questions when the new Government would be formed and ready to act and when the note would be agreed with our allies and despatched, the Secretary of State mentioned Tuesday, October 1.

4.

STATEMENT BY MAJOR-GENERAL VON EULITZ, THE MILITARY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KING OF SAXONY.

On August 1, 1919, the General wrote to General von Mertz:

"The publication of the new German White Book on the preliminaries to the armistice compels me to send you my report of September 30, 1918, on a discussion which General Ludendorff had with the three military representatives at G.H.Q. This report was made immediately after the discussion from notes which I jotted down as it was proceeding.

"At 11.15 this morning General Ludendorff made the following communication to the German military representatives at G.H.Q.:

"'Events in Bulgaria have taken Main Headquarters by surprise.* The Bulgarian Army has collapsed. Armistice concluded to-day. The position of the Tsar with regard to these events is not quite clear.

"'Four German and two Austrian divisions are on their way to Nish to restore the situation. Further, one German division has been sent to Constantinople. We thus lose seven divisions for use in the west or against Rumania. The position in Rumania is obscure but demands special attention.

"'Turkey is menaced. It is to be feared that the Entente will send troops from Macedonia to Constantinople in Turkey's rear, and thus place her in a most difficult position.

"'The frontiers of Austria, and therefore our south-eastern front, are threatened. Events in the east will draw away troops from the west. This will have a most unfavourable reaction on the western front.

"'The position on the western front is well known. Twenty-two German divisions must be broken up. The numerical superiority of the Entente thus increases to thirty or forty

* We always anticipated a loss of ground, but we hoped that the reserves we had ready would bring the advance to a standstill. [The Author.]

divisions. The thirty-eight American divisions have a particularly high establishment. On the other hand, the strengths of our divisions are progressively dwindling. Several divisions only exist on paper.

"'It is not, however, the low strengths of our divisions which make our position serious but rather the tanks which appear by surprise in ever greater numbers.

"'When we read the reports of the armies we can only be deeply moved by the examples of incomparable heroism and self-sacrifice given by the leaders and men of all German tribes. Of course it is true also that many divisions, worn out by fighting, have failed, and their withdrawal has involved that of their neighbours also.

"'It remains for me to inquire more closely into the reasons for this failure. Owing to the effect of the tanks our operations on the western front have now practically assumed the character of a game of chance. The General Staff can no longer work with definite factors.

"'Events in Bulgaria and their consequences, the strain on the western front with no prospect of any improvement, the impossibility of restoring the situation by an offensive, have convinced the Field-Marshal and myself that in the interests of the army it is necessary that hostilities should end.

"'This view of the military situation was reported to His Majesty the Kaiser yesterday after a discussion with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

"'His Majesty has commanded that the Imperial Chancellor and German foreign policy shall adapt themselves to the views held by the Supreme Command.

"'The necessary steps will presumably be taken by the new Government to be formed in Berlin. The choice of the time and the measures to be adopted are essentially the affair of the Government, not of the General Staff.'

"General Ludendorff concluded his remarks with the words:

"'The situation is serious. It demands far-reaching decisions.

The Field-Marshal and I have come to this conclusion, not on the impulse of the moment, but after full consideration, as our duty requires.'

"General Ludendorff was definite and clear. I was particularly struck by his calm self-possession.

"VON EULITZ,
"Major-General."

5.

WHAT MY COLLEAGUES THOUGHT.

(*a*) Letter from my former colleagues on August 16, 1919.

"The White Book, 'Preliminaries to the Armistice,' charges Your Excellency with confusion in your judgment of events and an illogical appreciation of the situation at the time of the armistice proposal and negotiations, attributing them to nervous collapse.

"We, the undersigned former colleagues of Your Excellency, who at the time in question were every day in constant official and unofficial touch with Your Excellency, regard ourselves as compelled to refute that charge in the most definite manner. We know that Your Excellency, like every other officer at Main Headquarters, was moved to the depths by the events at the front and the state of affairs at home. But not one of us noticed anything which in the slightest degree indicated a nervous collapse or betrayed any impairment of your clear judgment and your far-sighted and resolute leadership.

"VON BARTENWERFFER, Major-General,
"Late Deputy Chief of Staff to the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army;

"VON MERTZ, Colonel,
"Late Departmental Director on the Staff of the Chief of the General Staff;

"BARON VON OLDERSHAUSEN, Major-General,
"Then Director-General of Field Railways;

"VON THAER, Colonel,
"Then Chief of Staff to the Quartermaster-General;

"THOMSEN, Colonel,
"Then Chief of the General Staff of the Air Force."

(*b*) Letter of February 20, 1919, from Major-General von Bartenwerffer.

"Berlin,
"February 20, 1919.

"To Colonel Heye.

"With reference to the reply of Minister-President Scheidemann to the letter of the Field-Marshal with regard to the expression, 'General Ludendorff, the ingenious gambler of this world-war,' I must permit myself the following remarks:

"At ten o'clock in the evening of September 29 General Ludendorff spoke as follows, at a meeting of his departmental directors. Events on the Macedonian front had compelled him to send reserves to the Balkans which were earmarked for the west. He had no more reserves available for the western front. In view of the desperate fighting he would be acting as a pure gambler if he had not pressed for the immediate ending of the war by an armistice. That was being done.

"I know that General Ludendorff repeated these expressions to other gentlemen. In one case—I think it was at a meeting of the military representatives—I was present.

"As His Excellency Scheidemann says that it is established by documents that General Ludendorff described himself as a gambler, and inasmuch as General Ludendorff was not in Berlin on the October 1 in question, I must assume that His Excellency Scheidemann bases his remark on a report from Spa, presumably by some representative of the Foreign Office or the Imperial Chancellor, to whom General Ludendorff made the same remark as that given above. The expression used by General Ludendorff proves the exact reverse of what His Excellency Scheidemann maintains. General Ludendorff did not wish to be a gambler. Hence his insistence on an armistice.

(Signed) "von Bartenwerffer,
"Major-General."

(*c*) On September 30 Colonel von Haeften writes as follows in an official report on the events of the autumn of 1918, which he drew up for Main Headquarters and which Colonel Heye sent to me in March, 1919, with the consent of the Field-Marshal:

"Between ten and eleven o'clock in the morning of September 30 General Ludendorff called me up on the telephone from Spa, gave me a summary of the results of the conference and begged me, once the great and fateful decision was taken, to do everything possible in Berlin to move the Government to swift and energetic action. *He insisted most expressly that he had no desire to hustle them*, but that every day of delay and inaction might have fatal consequences.

"He asked me to use my influence with Secretary of State von Hintze to make him stay at his post and initiate peace overtures. In the afternoon I spoke in that sense to the Secretary of State, but he adhered to his decision to resign his office. If the peace step was to succeed, it must be taken by the new Government. I remarked that some time might elapse before the new Government was formed and that action must be taken immediately. He interrupted my words with the reply: 'Oh, but the new Government will be formed by to-morrow afternoon at the latest, and the peace offer can be issued to-morrow evening.' I took the liberty of expressing my doubts on the point.

"Late in the evening of September 30 I rang up General Ludendorff. I began with a report of the stage reached in the ministerial crisis, and expressed my unfeigned astonishment at the way in which the Crown was pushed on one side in finding a solution. The Crown must now decide who was to be entrusted with the formation of the new Government and the negotiations with the political parties. Hitherto a prospective chancellor had not been so much as named. Meanwhile the political parties had been acting on their own authority and had offered the post of Imperial Chancellor to

Vice-Chancellor von Payer. Von Payer had refused the offer, so that at the moment the position was confused and it was quite uncertain when the new Government would be formed. The proceedings in the matter of forming a Government, which so far had been without precedent even in countries with parliamentary government, no longer meant devolution, but rather *revolution*, as the authority of the Majority Parties was ousting the authority of the Crown.

"In reply to my question as to who was responsible for all this and the exclusion of the Kaiser, General Ludendorff replied that Secretary of State von Hintze had suggested it to His Majesty."

6.

The "Pressure" of October 1

(*a*) Extract from No. 19 of the Official "Preliminaries to the Armistice."

"Secretary of Legation Jordan, in conversation with the German Legation* in Vienna. His Excellency Stumm has asked me to tell you that it is absolutely necessary, not only that our proposals should be accepted in principle, but that we should have a formal reply in Berlin this morning, as the step must be taken during the day. The *locus in quo* of negotiations is of minor importance. Washington may be proposed for motives of courtesy only, and the possibility of another place is not excluded. In any event we must have the answer this morning. . . ."

(*b*) On October 1 Major Baron von dem Busche writes as follows in his report, previously referred to:

"On October 1 I was rung up by General Ludendorff, who had received news from Berlin of the delays in the formation of the Cabinet. He asked me to act on his instructions and put pressure on Vice-Chancellor von Payer,

* German Embassy? [The Author.]

who was then in charge of affairs, to see that the offer of peace was made at once. He added that after Main Headquarters had now come to this serious decision they must insist that no time be lost. To my objection that the formation of the Ministry was bound to take a certain time, he replied that in that case we must insist that the gentlemen in Berlin make haste and come to some agreement.

"I executed my commission with regard to Vice-Chancellor von Payer, and he assured me that he was doing everything in his power. He once more drew my attention to the great difficulties involved in the fact that there was no one as yet to sign the offer of peace. He regarded his own signature as useless. The new Imperial Chancellor was not yet named. Nor was he certain whether he would succeed in forming a Cabinet.* I was requested to ask the Supreme Command whether the publication of our offer of peace could not be postponed. In reply to my question the following telegram was dictated:

"'1.30 p.m., October 1, 1918. To Major von dem Busche for Vice-Chancellor von Payer.

"'If we know for certain by seven or eight o'clock to-night that Prince Max of Baden is forming his Ministry, I can agree to postponement until to-morrow morning.

"'If, on the other hand, the formation of the Ministry is in any way doubtful, I regard the issue of our peace proposals to the Foreign Governments this evening as essential.

(Signed) "'VON HINDENBURG.'

"Note handed over October 1, at 2 p.m.

(Signed) "VON DEM BUSCHE."

"This telegram," continues Major von dem Busche, "is the only thing which can be regarded as a ground for the assertion

* This sentence summarizes the whole method of forming a new Government, which Colonel von Haeften described. It was the Vice-Chancellor's business to form a Cabinet only when he was himself Imperial Chancellor and had been instructed by the Kaiser to do so.

that the Supreme Command demanded the publication of our peace proposals within twenty-four hours. But the reason for this telegram was not—as report had it in Berlin immediately afterwards—that we were faced with a collapse on the western front in the next few days. It is clear from the following statements that no military authority ever thought or said so. Its real purpose was to bring pressure on the ministers and parties to put their own and their party interests on one side and subordinate everything to the interests of the army and the Fatherland.

"On October 1 I was invited by Count Roedern to make a statement to members of the Upper Chamber. I was taken aback at this, bearing in mind what had happened previously, and came to the conclusion that I was to be exploited as the representative of the Supreme Command for the purposes of party controversy—putting pressure on the Right. As I was acquainted with General Ludendorff's definite principle that we must not mix ourselves up in party politics I declined the suggestion of a speech in the Upper Chamber. General Ludendorff subsequently declared that he approved of my decision.

"The following points are worth noting in connection with this incident. In many quarters the charge has been made against the Supreme Command that their action and that of their colleagues caused a panic in Berlin. I know that the charge does not apply to me, for what I said is down in black and white. (See my statement of October 2.*) But I certainly had the impression then that the Secretaries of State, especially Count Roedern, painted the military situation as black as possible to the parties to the Right when they returned from Spa, for the purpose of exercising pressure (as they had recommended and desired), and more particularly to get suffrage reform through the Upper Chamber at top speed. It was probably in the course of their efforts, which I was to

* 8 (below).

second at any rate to outward appearance, that the expressions "break-through, catastrophe," etc., were used.

"Prince Max of Baden arrived in Berlin in the afternoon.

"In the evening I was summoned to a conference between Prince Max of Baden, Vice-Chancellor von Payer, Secretary of State von Hintze and Count Roedern. I only said a few words. The Prince said he knew everything already. He only asked me whether the proposal for an armistice must be issued as soon as I said. I said 'Yes,' bearing in mind my instructions and the information I had been given (in reply to a further inquiry) by Colonel Heye or Major von Stulpnagel at Headquarters that there would of course be no change in their view of the necessity of speedy action. The Prince wished to make an offer of peace only. His suggestions were given short shrift by the ministers present.

"At this time there always seemed a possibility that the peace note could be issued on October 2, if agreement were reached as to its contents. There now appeared another obstacle. The Grand Duke of Baden had not yet notified his approval of Prince Max's acceptance of the office of Imperial Chancellor. All the gentlemen regarded it as quite impossible to obtain his approval before the next morning. The question had to be addressed through His Majesty the Kaiser. His Majesty was on his way from Spa to Berlin. I proposed that the matter should be settled by telephone. Spa took it in hand. The special train of His Majesty the Kaiser was stopped at Cologne, the Castle of Karlsruhe notified, the telephone service warned, and the inquiry was put through without any difficulty in an hour and a half. At midnight the approval of the Grand Duke of Baden had been obtained. The rapid establishment of telephone communication by the Supreme Command has given people in Berlin the impression that Main Headquarters had very urgent reasons for their hustle. As a matter of fact,

communication of this kind by telephone was an every-day affair. Apparently Berliners were not familiar with the use of the modern telephone service."

(*c*) Colonel von Haeften writes in his report on his dealings with me on October 1 and the morning of October 2:

"Between eleven o'clock and midnight I drew up for His Excellency von Ludendorff a report of the negotiations (between Vice-Chancellor von Payer and Prince Max of Baden) about the acceptance of the chancellorship and the impossibility of issuing the peace offer before the next day. However, Prince Max declined to sign it. His Excellency Ludendorff did not take the matter tragically. On the contrary, he discussed my counter-proposals quite calmly so that he gave me the impression that he did not insist on the literal execution of his telephonic instructions to Major von dem Busche. He told me that the approval of His Majesty and the Grand Duke of Baden would be obtained to the appointment of Prince Max. He expected that any moment. Even as he was speaking His Excellency received the report of His Majesty and the Grand Duke of Baden's consent by telephone, and he repeated his request to me to induce the Prince to sign. I promised that I would do my best on the following morning, but that I doubted whether the Prince would sign as he had not yet negotiated with the political parties. That would probably take several days. It was then about 1.30 a.m.

"At eight o'clock on the morning of October 2 I called on the Prince to put General Ludendorff's request before him. The Prince was very pressed for time as he had just had a conversation with Herr Ebert, the leader of the Social Democratic Party. He could not sign before he had come to an agreement with the leaders of the political parties. In the course of October 2 I reported the situation several times by telephone to General Ludendorff, and told him that the offer of peace would not be issued that day and probably not on

October 3. It was intended to summon the Reichstag for October 5, and announce the proposals for peace and an armistice, which were to be issued on October 4, in the opening speech. His Excellency declared his agreement with this course as long as the Reichstag was definitely summoned for the time in question."

(*d*) Acting *Geheimrat* von Berg, the Chief of the Civil Cabinet, writes as follows:

"Either the next morning or during the night Count Roedern and Herr von Hintze returned from Spa to Berlin, which they reached by midday on the 30th. There—without any instructions from His Majesty—they discussed matters with Herr von Payer and several other gentlemen as a preliminary, the reason being, as Count Roedern told me early on October 1, when I arrived in Berlin, that he knew quite well that it was my business to carry on the negotiations for the formation of a new Cabinet."

With regard to the statements of Major Baron von dem Busche and Colonel von Haeften, I have to say that their version of my intentions and actions is accurate. Believing that, as the Secretary of State von Hintze admitted to me, the Government could be formed by October 1 if there was good-will on the part of all concerned, at my request the Field-Marshal sent a telegram to Major von dem Busche when we were compelled to doubt whether that good-will could be assumed. It refrained from any description of the military situation and gave no reasons. The vital military justification for it is revealed by the account to be found in my book.

Shortly before the telegram mentioned by Major von dem Busche was sent off, I had a conversation with Councillors of Legation von Grünau and von Lersner, who were also wiring to Berlin, so that, instead of one, three telegrams arrived. As the telegram of Herr von Grünau was not couched in purely objective terms the effect of this circumstance was increased.

The telegrams made no impression on Secretary of State von Hintze. At 7.20, October 1, he replied as follows:

"1. Grünau.

"2. Lersner.

"New Government will probably be formed this evening (October 1). Offer can then be issued immediately—to-night. Military situation is best means of putting pressure on unreasonable and exacting parties.

(Signed) "VON HINTZE."

On the contrary, it must be assumed that when Prince Max of Baden, who was in no way familiar with the situation, arrived in Berlin at four o'clock in the afternoon, he felt that he was not a free agent. But, as a matter of fact, the telegram had no sort of effect, for the armistice proposals did not go to Berne until the evening of the 3rd, and they were there held up for twenty-four hours.

7.

MY ATTITUDE TO VARIOUS POINTS OF THE PEACE AND ARMISTICE PROPOSALS.

(*a*) Major von dem Busche created a certain amount of anger at the wording of the note at the sitting at nine o'clock on the morning of October 2, in which he described the situation to the party leaders. I shall have to refer to this meeting again in another connection. He writes as follows:

"His Excellency von Payer had apparently read out the suggested contents of the peace note shortly before I entered. When I had finished Count Westarp fastened on my words that the enemy must know that we were determined to continue the war if he offered us what was a humiliating peace. He objected to a mere acceptance of Wilson's fourteen points. The Vice-Chancellor was very angry, and denied that interpretation of our peace note. Anyhow, the wording of the peace note seemed to me suspicious, and I informed Headquarters by telephone that the text patently justified the

inference that Germany would unconditionally accept Wilson's demands."

I thereupon decided to give Major Baron von dem Busche, at 12.20 p.m. on October 2, 1918, the following instructions, to be transmitted to Vice-Chancellor von Payer:

No. 29 of the White Book.

"All I know of the contents of the proposed peace note is that the fourteen points of Wilson's note are to serve as a basis for peace conversations, but are not to have the force of conditions imposed by the enemy."

(*b*) At lunch I received, possibly from Councillor of Legation von Lersner, or some other source (I cannot remember for certain now), the draft of a note which more or less corresponds to No. 20 of the White Book, of October 1:

"The undersigned Imperial Minister is instructed and has the honour to request the Federal Government to inform the President of the United States of America by telegraph that the Imperial Government requests President Wilson to take steps for the restoration of peace and for that purpose to invite plenipotentiaries of all the States at war to Washington. (As a matter of fact, in deference to the objections of Austria-Hungary, the idea of Washington had been dropped. [The Author.]) The Imperial Government also puts forward the suggestion that the conclusion of an *immediate** general armistice on all fronts be proposed. It declares that it accepts the fourteen points laid down in the Presidential message of January 8, and the four principles put forward in his speech of February 11, as a *basis for peace negotiations*."*

My counter-proposal:

No. 30 of the White Book.

"Telephone conversation between Councillor of Legation von Lersner, General Headquarters, and Secretary of Legation Dr. Jordan, Foreign Office. 2.40 p.m., October 2, 1918.

* The italics are mine. [The Author.]

"Councillor of Legation von Lersner speaking: 'Ask Dr. Jordan to come to the phone at once. General Ludendorff proposes the following wording'" (there must have been some previous conversation, as otherwise the expression, "General Ludendorff proposes the following wording," without showing what document is referred to, would be unintelligible): "'The German Government requests the President of the United States of America to take steps for the restoration of peace, and for that purpose to invite plenipotentiaries of all the States at war.

"'It declares that it is prepared to agree that the programme announced by the President of the United States of America in his message to Congress of January 8, 1918, and subsequent speeches shall serve as a basis for the peace negotiations.

"'The German Government moreover proposes the conclusion of an armistice by land and sea and requests the President of the United States of America to take steps to bring about an armistice now, in order to avoid further bloodshed. . . .'

(Signed) "VON LERSNER."

My counter proposal differed in two very material points from the draft I had before me. It did not ask for an immediate armistice and it said that we would agree that Wilson's speeches should serve as a basis for peace negotiations. The expression in the draft of the Foreign Office seemed to me objectionable. That was the so-called "Pressure by the Supreme Command."

The actual wording of the first German note was as follows:

No. 34 of the White Book.

"The German Government requests the President of the United States of America to take steps for the restoration of peace, to inform all States now at war of this request and invite them to send plenipotentiaries for the purpose of

beginning negotiations. It accepts the programme set out by the President of the United States of America in his message to Congress of January 8, 1918, and later speeches, particularly his address of September 27, as a basis for peace negotiations.

"To avoid further bloodshed the German Government requests that an armistice by land, sea and air should be concluded immediately.

(Signed) "MAX, PRINCE OF BADEN,
"Imperial Chancellor."

8.

THE COURSE OF EVENTS IN BERLIN ON OCTOBER 2.

Major von dem Busche describes the course of events in Berlin on this day as follows:

"At 9 a.m. on October 2 I spoke at a meeting of the Reichstag party leaders (Count Westarp, von Gamp, Stresemann, Groeber, Seyda, Fischbeck, Ebert, Haase), presided over by Vice-Chancellor von Payer.

"The military situation before the last great events has been described by General von Wrisberg. It has changed fundamentally in the last few days.

"The collapse of the Bulgarian front had played havoc with our dispositions. Our communications with Constantinople were threatened, as was the river traffic on the Danube, which was absolutely indispensable to our system of food supply. If we did not wish to give the Entente an absolutely free hand in the Balkans and surrender the Black Sea and Rumania to them, we were compelled to send German and Austro-Hungarian divisions which were ear-marked for the western front. A quick decision was necessary. Our first troops had been detrained. We had good reason to hope that the situation in the Balkans could be restored as far as it was necessary for our interests, unfortunately not without serious prejudice to the general situation.

"Great attacks had begun in the west almost simultaneously with the offensive in Macedonia. They had not found us unprepared. All measures had been taken to frustrate them. Divisions from the east were on their way to relieve war-worn divisions from the west. Unfortunately some of them had had to be turned back for the Balkans. The east had already been drained of its last man fit for active service. We could face the decisive struggle in the west with confidence. The Entente were very clever in concealing from us which part of the front they intended to attack. Preparations for attack could be seen everywhere from the sea to Switzerland. They were most noticeable in Lorraine and the Sundgau. We were compelled to distribute our reserves and keep the whole front more or less in a state of defence. In Lorraine and the Sundgau particularly, considerable forces had had to be assembled for the purpose of protecting German soil.

"After all the necessary movements had been carried through we had felt quite confident that we could hold out victoriously in the approaching battles and break the will of our enemies as a result of the great losses they could be expected to suffer.

"In the result we had succeeded in holding up the enemy at all points where he had penetrated our lines thanks to his tanks, surprise or his numerical superiority, and we had broken the force of his thrust by the prompt intervention of our reserves. We had come successfully through the fighting of the last six days in spite of losses in prisoners and material. In comparison with our successes in the spring offensive the enemy had made little progress. At most points his attacks, which had been continued with unusual obstinacy, had been defeated. Our troops reported that he had suffered the heaviest losses.

"The great majority of our men had fought superbly and performed superhuman feats. Our ancient heroism was not a thing of the past. Our troops had not been terrorized by

the enemy's superiority in numbers. Officers and men had outvied one another.

"Yet in spite of all this the Supreme Command had been forced to the very serious conclusion *that in all human probability there was no longer any prospect of compelling the enemy to make peace.**

"Two facts were vital for the issue.

"1. *The Tanks.* The enemy had used them in unexpectedly large numbers. In cases where they had penetrated our positions by surprise after a plentiful use of artificial fog the nerves of our men had frequently been unequal to the strain. In those cases they had broken through our first lines, opened the way for their infantry, appeared in our rear, created local panic and made control by the commanders impossible. As soon as their presence was realized our tank defences and artillery were immediately ready for them. Unfortunately the mischief had been done by then, and to a great extent the large number of prisoners, which diminished our fighting strength so seriously and involved a more speedy intervention of our reserves than hitherto, was explained by the successes of the tanks.

"We were not in a position to meet the enemy with an equal number of German tanks. To produce them was beyond the resources of our industry, which was already working at the highest strain, or else other important things would have had to be put on one side.

"2. The question of drafts had become absolutely vital.† The army had entered upon the great battle with a low establishment. In spite of all the measures we had taken battalion strengths had fallen from about 800 in April to about 540 at the end of September. We had only been able

* In italics in the White Book.

† Major Baron von dem Busche has forgotten the waning *moral* of the nation [The Author.]

to keep them at that figure by breaking up twenty-two infantry divisions (=66 infantry regiments).

"The Bulgarian defeat had swallowed up another seven divisions. We had no prospect of increasing our strengths. Our current sources of replacement, men returned from hospital and men combed out, would not cover the wastage of a winter campaign, even if uneventful. The employment of our 1900 class would only increase the battalion establishment by about 100. We should have then thrown in our very last reserve.

"The losses we had suffered in the battle in progress had exceeded our expectations, especially as regards officers. That was vital. Whether for defence or attack the troops needed the example of their officers more than ever before. The officers had had to, and did expose and sacrifice themselves without regard to anything. Regimental commanders and higher officers had been fighting in the front line. To take one example: One division in two days of fighting lost all its officers, killed or wounded, and its three regimental commanders were dead. The small nucleus of regular officers still left was melting away. It was now scarcely possible to reconstruct the divisions which were coming out of the great battle.

"*Thanks to the help from America the enemy were in a position to make good their losses.** *The American troops were not in themselves of any special value or in any way superior to ours.*† At those points where they had obtained initial successes, thanks to their employment in mass, their attacks had been beaten off in spite of their superior numbers. But it was a vital advantage that they could take over large sections of the front and thus make it possible for the English and French to relieve their own veteran divisions and create an almost inexhaustible reserve.

"Hitherto our reserves had sufficed to stop the gaps. The railways had brought them up in time. Unprecedentedly heavy attacks had been successfully beaten off. The battles

* In italics in the White Book. [The Author.]

† The italics are mine. [The Author.]

were said to be fiercer than anything known hitherto. Our reserves were now coming to an end. If the enemy continued his attacks the situation might compel us to retire fighting from large sections of the front. By such methods we might continue the war for an incalculable period, inflict heavy losses on our enemies and leave a desert behind us, but we could not win that way. This conviction and the course of events had brought the Field-Marshal and General Ludendorff to the conclusion that they ought to suggest to His Majesty the Kaiser that an effort should be made to bring the fighting to an end so that the German nation and its allies might be spared further sacrifices.

"Just as our great offensive of July, 1915, had been broken off immediately its continuation was seen to be out of all proportion to the losses it involved, so now we must decide that the continuation of the war had no prospects for us. There was still time. The German Army was still strong enough to keep its enemies at bay for months, win local successes and face the Entente with the necessity for further sacrifice. But every day brought our enemies nearer to their goal and made them less inclined to give us a tolerable peace.

"Hence there was no time to lose. The position might get worse every day and give our opponents a chance of openly recognizing our present weakness.

"That might have the most disastrous consequences for our peace prospects as well as the military situation.

"Neither the army nor the public at home must do anything which revealed weakness. Quite the contrary. The nation and the army must hold together more firmly than before. When the peace proposals were issued there must be a united front at home to tell the world that we are firmly resolved to continue the war if the enemy will not give us peace, or will only grant us a humiliating peace.

"If those circumstances materialize, the army's abilities to hold out would depend to a vital degree on the firm attitude

of the nation and the spirit which the nation could breathe into it."

MAJOR BARON VON DEM BUSCHE'S NOTES ON HIS SPEECH.

"1. I read out my speech. It was only in those parts which dealt with the achievements of our fighting forces that I sought and found more moving words.

"2. Before I began, on instructions from Main Headquarters, I asked all those present most earnestly to keep the contents of my speech a strict secret. I impressed upon them most seriously the excellent work done by the enemy's intelligence service and the advantages which would accrue to the enemy if he clearly realized our position. Not one member of that conference raised any objection to my request. What followed is well known. Within a few hours the most monstrous rumours were current on my authority."

Colonel von Haeften writes, in his report to Main Headquarters:

". . . I went to a meeting of the party leaders summoned for 9 a.m. by His Excellency von Payer. Major von dem Busche was to enlighten these gentlemen as to the seriousness of the military situation. Unfortunately I was not able to be present myself as His Excellency von Payer had expressed a wish that with the exception of Major von dem Busche no non-politician should be present. This was destined to have fateful consequences. Major von dem Busche, who naturally did not know *what* party leaders were present, made approximately the same statement as he had done to the leaders of the party of the Right on September 30 and indeed was entitled to do in dealing with trustworthy persons. Of course there had to be some guarantee that no improper use should be made of any part of his strictly confidential and secret communication. Had I, who knew everyone in the

parliamentary world, been present, I should have drawn the attention of the members to the fact that the Pole, Seyda, was taking part in the meeting. It was obvious that such a man could only be told things which the general public could know. The German Poles had, through Stockholm, direct communication with Paris, from which throughout the whole war they were supplied with money by the Entente.

"It can therefore be regarded as certain that Major von dem Busche's speech, which exposes the seriousness and weakness of our military position in the frankest manner possible, will be known in the Entente capitals in a few days. Considered from that point of view, it is clear that our peace offer, and more particularly the armistice proposals, are bound to be a catastrophe for Germany.

"As a matter of fact Major von dem Busche's statements—to a certain extent greatly exaggerated—were in everyone's mouth at home and abroad in a few days, and to that extent it is not inaccurate to say, as a certain leading politician put it, that Major von dem Busche's mission had had a disastrous effect. It goes without saying that not the slightest reproach can be made against that honest officer, who acted conscientiously in the sense of his instructions. On the contrary, it was the duty of the Government to inform the party leaders individually and to give Major von dem Busche a preliminary hint as to whom he had before him, so that he could have adapted his statements accordingly."

9.

Proceedings in Berlin on October 3.

The Field-Marshal was presented with a number of questions to which he immediately replied. I have given the answers under the questions.

No. 32 of the White Book.

Telegram of the Imperial Chancellor Prince Max to Field-Marshal von Hindenburg.

"Berlin,
"October 3.

"Before I make up my mind to take action with a view to peace, as the Supreme Command desires, I have the honour of requesting a reply from Your Excellency to the following questions.

"*Question* 1. How long can the army keep the enemy on the far side of the German frontier?"

Reply: "The question cannot be answered in the precise form in which it is put. Our ability to hold out depends on many factors, and also upon the question in what force and with what material resources the enemy can continue his offensive and what powers of resistance we may be able to reveal as time goes by.

"At the moment the German Army is standing firm but it is compelled to retire from one section after another, though still clinging obstinately to hostile soil. It is impossible to say precisely beforehand how long this retrograde movement will continue. We can only hope that we shall protect German soil up to next spring."

"*Question* 2. Is the Supreme Command bound to expect a military collapse, and if so when? Would the collapse mean the end of our military resistance?"

Reply: "The question is covered by the answer to Question 1. I do not think that a general collapse is likely. The withdrawal of our front as the result of any irruptions need not have any such consequence so long as we have any kind of reserve available."

"*Question* 3. Is the military situation so critical that action with a view to an armistice and peace must be taken at once?"

This was answered in the letter of October 3, 1918.

No. 33 of the White Book.

"Berlin, October 3.

"The Supreme Command adheres to the demand it made on Sunday, September 29, that an offer of peace should be immediately made to our enemies. As a result of the collapse of the Macedonian front and the drain on our reserves in the west which it has involved, and in view of the impossibility of making good the very heavy losses which we have suffered in the battles of the last few days, in all human judgment there is no longer any prospect of compelling our enemies to make peace.

"The enemy is continually feeding his battle line with new and fresh reserves.

"*On the other hand, the German Army stands firm and victoriously beats off all attacks.** But the position becomes more difficult every day and may compel the Supreme Command to take serious decisions.

"In these circumstances it is necessary to bring the fighting to an end in order to spare the German nation and its allies useless sacrifices. *Every day's delay costs thousands of brave lives.*

(Signed) "VON HINDENBURG.
"Field-Marshal."

"*Question* 4. If the answer to Question 3 is in the affirmative, does the Supreme Command realize that the initiation of peace negotiations under the pressure of the military situation may lead to the loss of the German colonies and German territory, particularly Alsace-Lorraine and the purely Polish districts of the eastern provinces?"

Answer: "*The Supreme Command has contemplated, if it proves unavoidable, the loss of the small French-speaking portions of Alsace-Lorraine. As far as it is concerned there can be no question of surrendering German territory in the East.*"†

* The italics are mine. [The Author.]

† Reproduced by me in italics. [The Author.]

"*Question* 5. Does the Supreme Command agree to the sending of the note, copy of which is enclosed?"

Note.—The note was not enclosed. It was discussed at the conference without any final decision being come to.

I think that this account will give a different impression to that conveyed by the White Book. It reveals the seriousness of the military situation and our honest desire for the termination of hostilities. But it also shows the limits of the concessions we were prepared to make.

Major von dem Busche writes as follows in his notes on the conference:

"The Field-Marshal quite definitely adopted the point of view that Wilson's fourteen points could only serve *as a basis* for negotiations. If German territory was to be surrendered on any considerable scale Germany must fight on. *It was better to go down fighting than to lose one's honour.**

"Count Roedern, supported by the others, opposed him. That might be the attitude of the generals, but the Government's business was to save anything that could be saved. Of the Secretaries of State present, i.e., Payer, Hintze, Roedern, Solf and Friedberg, Payer was the only one who opposed the unconditional acceptance of Wilson's programme. Count Roedern finally induced the Prussian Cabinet to agree unanimously to the peace note.

"A noteworthy feature of the discussion was that Prince Max did not wish the peace note to be issued at all, but preferred to introduce his peace programme to the Entente in his first speech to the Reichstag. The issue of a peace note would then depend upon its reception. This proposal was unanimously rejected.

"Secretary of State Solf suggested that the peace note should not be sent to Wilson alone, but to England, France and America at the same time. Hintze opposed that idea and this proposal also was rejected. Incidentally, only a short

* The italics are mine. [The Author.]

time before, on General Ludendorff's instructions I had recommended what Solf proposed to Payer and Hintze."

Colonel von Haeften writes as follows in his report on October 3:

"On October 3 there was a series of conferences between the Imperial Chancellor, Prince Max of Baden and several political and parliamentary leaders. Special importance attached to a conference on the afternoon of October 3 between him, the Field-Marshal, Secretary of State von Hintze, the Vice-Chancellor and the Secretary of the Treasury, Count Roedern, to discuss the wording of the peace and armistice proposals. At this Under Secretaries of State von Stumm, von dem Busche, von Radowitz, General von Winterfeldt, several representatives of the Foreign Office and myself were present. I do not know whether the Foreign Office has kept any record of this meeting. The Imperial Chancellor expressed himself very earnestly against an over-hasty issue of the note, and he made great efforts to get the suggestion of armistice proposals withdrawn. A noteworthy feature of the conference was that the Field-Marshal saw no objection to a delay in issuing the peace note as his opinion of the military situation was in no sense as grave as the statements of Major von dem Busche must have suggested.

"Secretary of State von Hintze, on the other hand, insisted on publishing the note at once. He also regarded the armistice proposals as necessary and in the long run the Field-Marshal agreed with him. The wording of the original Note was altered in a few points. In particular, we reserved opinion with regard to Alsace-Lorraine in agreeing to Wilson's fourteen points. The draft of the peace proposals which General Ludendorff had drawn up and given to Secretary of State von Hintze was not the subject of discussion at the conference at all. Such a draft is not to be found among the records of the Foreign Office or the Imperial Chancery, and it has never been in my hands. I only know from

information which General Ludendorff gave me subsequently that on September 29 (the date is wrong.—The Author) he handed a draft to Secretary of State von Hintze, who apparently rejected it straight off. At the conclusion of the conference it was decided to summon the Reichstag for Sunday the 5th and to issue the note in the night of the 4th, so that it should be in the hands of the American Government on the day on which its contents were to be announced in the Reichstag. It was decided to proceed with the armistice proposal.

"After this meeting I made my report by telephone to General Ludendorff. I repeated Prince Max's objection to the armistice proposal and on his instructions asked His Excellency's consent to issuing the peace note only, without an express request for an armistice. I also told him that the Field-Marshal had described the military situation in terms less grave than those employed by Major von dem Busche. His Excellency replied that the Field-Marshal was certainly right in his judgment of the situation but he must adhere to his desire for an armistice and insist on an offer being issued as soon as possible. Even if the situation was not threatening at the moment we might certainly expect a repetition of the enemy's great attacks on the whole front* very shortly. Then —in two or three weeks—a matter of twenty-four hours might be of vital importance if an armistice proved to be absolutely necessary to the German Army.†

"Late in the afternoon there was a final conference on the same matter in the house of the Vice-Chancellor. At this Secretary of State Solf supported the Vice-Chancellor and opposed Secretary of State von Hintze, both with regard to the suggestion of an armistice and the question of issuing it before the reconstruction of the Government was complete. The final form of the note was settled at this meeting.

* The West, Italy and the Balkans. [The Author.]

† Austria-Hungary collapsed entirely three weeks later. [The Author.]

10.

PROCEEDINGS IN BERLIN ON OCTOBER 5.

(*a*) Extract from the speech of the Imperial Chancellor, Prince Max.

"Behind us lie more than four years of bloody conflict with a world of enemies superior in number, years full of desperate fighting and the most grievous sacrifices. Each one of us bears its scars; only too many of us show open wounds, either in our inmost souls or on our bodies willingly devoted to the freedom of Germany on the battlefield.

"*Yet are we resolved, undaunted and possessed of unbounded confidence in our strength, to endure even greater sacrifices for our honour and freedom and the welfare of those who come after us if they prove inevitable.* With a feeling of deep and passionate gratitude we think of our brave troops who have achieved superhuman feats under brilliant leadership during the whole war and whose deeds are a certain guarantee that as in the past so in the future our destinies are in good hands. In the west a fearful and murderous battle has been raging continuously for months. Thanks to the incomparable heroism of our army, which will live for all time in the history of the German people as a deathless page of glory, our front is still unbroken. This proud knowledge enables us to look into the future with confidence.

"It is because we are animated by this consciousness and conviction that *it is our duty to make certain that the bloody struggle, with all its sacrifices, shall not continue for a single day beyond the moment at which there seems any prospect of securing an issue which does not touch our honour.* For that reason I have not waited until to-day before taking steps to promote the idea of peace. Supported by the approval of all those in high position in the Empire, and also that of our allies who are acting with us, in the night of October 5 I addressed through Swiss channels a note to the President of the United

States of America. In that note I asked him to take steps for the restoration of peace, and for that purpose to get into touch with all the States at war. The note will reach Washington to-day or to-morrow.

"It was addressed to the President of the United States because in his message to Congress of January 8, 1918, and later speeches, especially his New York speech of September 27, he outlined a programme for a general peace which we could accept as a basis for negotiations. I have taken this step on the road to the salvation, not of Germany and her allies only, but also of humanity, which has been suffering from this war for years, because I think that the programme for the future welfare of the nations which Herr Wilson has put forward is in perfect harmony with the general principles by which the new German Government and with it the overwhelming majority of our nation is inspired.

"As far as my own position is concerned, my previous speeches to other audiences are a proof that there has been no change in my ideals of a future peace since I was entrusted with the conduct of Imperial affairs.

"What I desire is an honourable and lasting peace for all mankind and I am convinced that such a peace would be at the same time the greatest safeguard for the future welfare of our own country. As far as peace is concerned I see no difference between national and international obligations. For me the vital matter, and the only vital matter, is that our proposals should be accepted and respected by all concerned with the same sense of honour as they have been by me and the other members of the new Government.

"I therefore look forward to the result of the first step which I have taken as the Empire's First Minister with the calm assurance born of my good conscience as a man and servant of our nation, an assurance which is based on my boundless confidence in our glorious army and great and loyal people, to the devotion of whom there is no limit.

"As for that result, I know that it will find Germany firm and united and ready both for an honourable peace which repudiates all selfish encroachments on the rights of other nations, or for the final life or death struggle which will be forced upon our guiltless people if the answer to our offer by the Powers at war with us is dictated by the determination to destroy us.

"I am not frightened at the prospect of the second alternative, for I know the resources which our people still has at its disposal, and I realize that the unconquerable determination to fight for our life as a nation will double those resources."

(*b*) Extract from the speech of the President, Fehrenbach.

"The German people look proudly to their war-tried army and valiant navy which have now been defending our Fatherland against superior enemies for more than four years. The German nation deeply deplores and realizes with grief the terrible sacrifices which have had to be made for Germany's sake not only in the field but also at home. But, like every soldier at the front, every German at home is ready to make any sacrifice that is required for the Fatherland.* May we be spared such sacrifices, for the German people desire peace, not war. Like every other nation it is longing for a peace which shall put an end to this fearful bloodshed. We therefore welcome the step which the Government has announced to us to-day, a step which holds out the prospect of peace, even if still indefinite. In the name of the German

* It is plain from the utterances both of the Imperial Chancellor and the President of the Reichstag that they still fail to realize the meaning of this war of destruction that was being waged against us. The Reichstag majority had deserted the ground on which it stood even as late as 1917. On June 6, 1917, Dr. David had made the following declaration in Stockholm:

"There had never been a moment in this war in which we had been shaken in our belief that Germany was fighting for the right to life and free development. Quite the contrary. That conviction has been confirmed with every new opponent who has joined the circle of our enemies."

I think that such knowledge should long before have opened everyone's eyes to the fact that every German had to make any sacrifice and that we were involved in a life and death struggle. [The Author.]

people and the Reichstag, of which the great majority is in agreement with the important step taken by the Government, I declare that we approve the offer of peace and adopt it as our own."

12.

The Meeting in Berlin on October 9. Preliminary Discussion with the Imperial Chancellor.

A.

The Imperial Chancellor's Questions and my Replies at the Sitting on October 9.

The following considerations were put forward as the reason for the questions:

We must reckon with the possibility that the conditions (which the President will impose) will be hard. We may therefore have to find an answer to the question whether our military situation permits us to work for better terms by negotiation, thus running the risk of losing several weeks, seeing Austria-Hungary and Turkey desert us, and finding that we have to accept the President's conditions in their original form after all.

I give below under Arabic figures the questions (No. 36 of the White Book):

I.—The written answers (No. 43 of the White Book).

II.—The answer according to the minutes (No. 38 of the White Book).

At the meeting I had the draft of the written answers on me. The questions were sent to me just before the meeting and I immediately drafted out the answers in pencil.

1. How long can the army keep the enemy on the far side of the German frontier, whether on its present lines or while gradually retiring?

I. The Rhine province can be held for a considerable time, as it is a long way from our present lines. An offensive in Alsace-Lorraine is possible at any time, though improbable at the moment.

II. The frontier is far from the western front, and we can protect it for a long time. Attacks in Lorraine possible, but I see no danger for the Lorraine front. I see no danger from the side of Holland, as troops which crossed the frontier would be interned.

2. Must we even to-day reckon with the possibility of a military collapse before the spring, and, if so, is there any danger of it in the next three or four weeks?

I. There is always a danger of collapse. I am not afraid of it. But it is possible.

II. There is still a danger of collapse. The English succeeded in breaking through in their first tank attack.

3. How long will the present crisis presumably last? Is the danger point passed when the enemy finds himself compelled to stop his big attacks, and when is it judged that moment will come?

I. We may anticipate several more weeks of big attacks. When they stop the danger point will have been passed.

II. Yes. The big attacks alone are dangerous.

4. When the danger point has been passed can we rely on consolidating our front, and by what means can that consummation be attained?

I. Yes, by disengaging our reserves. There are prospects of a quiet period for our army in the west if we call on all our available man-power (bringing in the 1900 class).

5. What is the situation with regard to drafts and material?

I. The monthly deficit of drafts amounts to at least 70,000 men. We have enough *matériel* for replacement.

II. We are 70,000 men a month short. No shortage

of *matériel.* (In the minutes this is erroneously put in the answer to Question 4.)

6. If the present peace efforts fail, can we continue the war until the spring by ourselves if one of the two allies that still stand by us falls out?

I. Yes, if there is a pause in the fighting in the west.

II. We should need a pause in the fighting and could then consolidate our lines again. (Erroneously put in Question 5 in the minutes.)

7. Does the Supreme Command expect a sufficient reinforcement from the *levée en masse* which Walther Rathenau recommends in the "Vossische Zeitung"?

I. A *levée en masse* would not bring us a sufficient reinforcement. What we need is energetic measures to increase our industrial output and the fullest possible use of existing material.

II. No. In spite of our shortage of man-power I expect nothing from a *levée en masse.* We desire a greater industrial output. I cannot say whether it will be possible to get hold of shirkers. In the opinion of the General Staff the "Garrison Duty" classification should be abolished. The "Garrison Duty" men don't want to fight now. We could get more men by stricter combing-out at home. *Levée en masse* would produce more disorganization than we could bear.*

After these seven questions No. 36 of the White Book continues:

In view of the reports we have received so far, it appears possible that President Wilson will require the evacuation of

* I explained to the meeting that in 1870–71 France had been able to institute a *levée en masse,* because at that time the army and the nation were not one and the same thing in the sense that applies to-day. To-day we had an army which was already the product of a *levée en masse.* Circumstances had absolutely changed. We had not only to fight, but to work. Clear-sighted decisions were required, not a hunt for a catch phrase. Moreover, I doubted whether the whole nation would really respond to the call.

Belgium and Northern France as a preliminary to any negotiations. The question must therefore be asked:

1. Would the Supreme Command advise us to accept such a demand unconditionally or reply to it with counter-proposals?

I. No unconditional acceptance, but counter-proposals.

The White Book continues:

If, in view of the considerations above, the military situation permitted of a loss of time in the negotiations, the following counter-proposals were mooted:

(*a*) The portions of Upper Alsace (eventually the German colonies also) occupied by France and England must be evacuated simultaneously.

I. Yes.

(*b*) We must have guarantees that the enemy will not follow us. Later on we might demand that the French areas evacuated by us should be occupied by American troops only, that only Belgian troops should enter Belgium, the neutrality of which should be respected by all the belligerents. Further, that Belgian territory should not be a theatre of war again.

I. A line of demarcation must be agreed. The neutrality of Belgium must be secured.

(*c*) A declaration by us that as compensation for the change for the worse in our strategic position in the west we must also withdraw our troops from the occupied areas in the east (the Baltic States, Lithuania, Poland and the Ukraine), though that means the surrender of these districts to Bolshevism.

I. The declaration can be given.

2. How soon can the evacuation of Northern France and Belgium be carried out if it begins immediately after the armistice is signed?

I. Two to three months. The evacuation must proceed by sectors.

3. When the evacuation is complete shall we be able to

hold the line of the Franco-German frontier with the forces still at our disposal if the peace negotiations subsequently fail and the enemy proceeds to attack us again?

I. Yes, if work is started on the frontier line at once.

II. We shall be able to hold the line of the frontier. We cannot surrender German fortresses. We must make counter-proposals.

With reference to 1 to 3 above:

II. We have an enormous quantity of material in the occupied districts. At a rough calculation evacuation will take two to three months if we march back (more, if transport by railway). The army must always be prepared to fight, and therefore retirement must be by sectors. If it stands on the line of the frontier it will be able to defeat any hostile attacks. The only drawback is the air danger to our industrial centres. We must therefore try to secure that only Belgian troops follow us into Belgium.

No. 36 of the White Book contains the following further questions:

President Wilson might demand the occupation of German fortresses on our western frontier on the ground that he required guarantees.

1. Should we be compelled to accept such a demand in view of the military situation?

I. No.

II. We could not hand over German fortresses. We must bring forward counter-proposals. Further the demand that we must evacuate Metz would be a violation of our military honour.

2. To what extent should we make the acceptance of the conditions dependent upon our counter-proposals?

I. ——.

II. *Imperial Chancellor:* Should the negotiations be

allowed to break down if French or English troops enter Belgium?

Ludendorff: No.

Chancellor: What is the position with regard to the demand for the evacuation by the enemy of German territory occupied by him?

Ludendorff: That depends on the military situation at the front.

B.

I GAVE THE FOLLOWING SUMMARY OF THE GENERAL MILITARY SITUATION. [No. 38 of White Book.]

In 1914 the situation was serious. Great numerical superiority of the enemy. In 1916, when Hindenburg and Ludendorff took over supreme command, the position was particularly serious owing to intervention of Rumania. Large forces were tied down by the operations in the east. Somme battle also was in progress. Shortage of ammunition. Hence the great efforts to find a remedy. Hindenburg programme. Higher demands for labour and drafts. Liability to military service extended.* Auxiliary Service Law.

1916 closed with certainty of great enemy superiority in east and west. Very anxious time. The U-boat campaign was the only means of holding the western front. The Field-Marshal and Ludendorff therefore agreed to it.† The withdrawal of our front. The Arras battle in April and May. Heavy losses but successful defence. The collapse of Russia made it easier for us to give direct support to Austria-Hungary, which was in danger of failing to survive the twelfth Isonzo battle. There was also the possibility of an offensive in the west, but we had first to free our rear in the east. We had

* My statements are given inaccurately, as proposals only were in question. [The Author.]

† There were other and very weighty reasons. [The Author.]

to prevent the formation of an Anglo-Bolshevik front. The conference at Homburg. Our movement in the north (Finland) to keep England away from Petersburg.

In addition there was food shortage. We were forced to go further east.* The Ukraine produced valuable raw materials and delayed the formation of a Bolshevik front. In the spring we had 205 divisions in the west, in the east 32, which were not fit for active operations. Our eastern front was quite thin. The Commander-in-Chief there was no longer certain of being able to keep Bolshevism away from the occupied districts.†

What was to be done in the west? In the spring we had a superiority of twenty to twenty-five divisions. An offensive was necessary to keep our allies at our side and if possible to win outright before the American masses arrived. There was no question of peace overtures at that time. The offensive was intended to make our enemies willing to make peace. That was equally true in June. Our hopes were not realized.‡

The reasons were: employment of massed tanks—influenza —our potato shortage. But, nevertheless, the military situation was good until August 8. On that day six or seven divisions were overrun in a fog in two or three hours. The sector broken through was a critical one. Obstinate attacks followed. In recent months our monthly deficit was 70,000 men. Officers and men were showing the greatest heroism. The reports from the front were most moving. (The dark side of this inspiring picture is omitted.—The Author.)

The great question is whether we shall have men enough. In April and June the Supreme Command asked for more drafts. The conference in August was for the same purpose. But no really decisive measures were taken. The War Minister must know whether they are still possible. The

* Must mean the Ukraine. [The Author.]

† This was the "dispersion of force," of which we have been accused. [The Author.]

‡ Unconsciously I used the same expression here as on August 13. It must have been always on my lips. [The Author.]

supply of *matériel* is assured, but we are short of men. The tank attacks are very dangerous. After August 8 the Supreme Command had told the Imperial Chancellor that they were no longer in a position to end the war for certain by a military blow which would force the enemy to come to terms. At the beginning of September, mediation by a neutral had been suggested by the Supreme Command.* Then came the collapse of Bulgaria.

As late as June we had an excellent impression of the Bulgarians.† Our ignorance of their language made it difficult to understand their psychology. Scholz had done a great deal for the Bulgarian army. But Bulgarian generals had overthrown Radoslavoff and started an agitation in the army. The Government then turned to the Entente. The Bulgarian General Staff had failed to dismiss bad divisional commanders. We had deflected five divisions to protect the south-eastern front of Austria-Hungary. The Entente could attack Constantinople through Bulgaria. The Turks were concentrating at Chataldja. We were sending reinforcements from Rumania.‡ Turkey would hold out. We should be able to hold the south-eastern front of the Monarchy, but were not in a position to secure the Danube and Rumania. Rumania cannot be held with the troops which we have there in accordance with the treaty. What is the danger from Bolshevism? It depends on that question whether we can withdraw from the Ukraine (other reasons were more important.—The Author), with a view to shortening our front and releasing a few divisions for the Danube. From a military point of view Rumania cannot be held against invasion from the south with the troops we have there now. We could only hold the line of the Sereth. Our troops consist of older men only. If we want to hold Rumania we

* This statement in the White Book is inaccurate. [The Author.]

† Entirely wrong. [The Author.]

‡ Inaccurate. [The Author.]

must know how great the Bolshevist danger is. We might send a few divisions to Rumania from the Ukraine, but in that case we should no longer have any military protection against Bolshevism. It is improbable that more than four or five divisions could be brought from the east to the western front.*

In the west the shortage of man-power is decisive. The position is serious. Yesterday was a critical day. The English broke through near St. Quentin. Not all the schemes of the Entente have been successful. A cavalry corps held in readiness was not able to develop its movement. But we have been compelled to withdraw. The divisions are no longer fit to fight. We would rather retreat than let ourselves be beaten. We keep our armies together better.

Such was my summary, approximately.

C.

FURTHER EXTRACTS FROM THE SITTING ON OCTOBER 9.

Scheidemann: What about the *moral* of the army? What about the divisional orders of the 41st Division.

Ludendorff: August 8 was a black day in history. A great blow to the High Command. The troops were a prey to influenza, there were no potatoes and the food was bad. Their *moral* was bad then, but has now improved. Men were brought up from the lines of communication. The "garrison service" men ruined their spirit; hence the heavy losses of prisoners. There seems to be a better spirit now.†

Ludendorff: The "spirit of some of the drafts is bad," and, in reply to a question by Erzberger:

"The figure of 70,000 men per month (deficit) is calculated without reference to the enemy's reinforcement. We need something to stimulate our national *moral.*"

* This is not given accurately. The reinforcements from the east for the west and Rumania have been confused. [The Author.]

† The minutes here are confused on several points. I wanted to abolish the "garrison duty" classification. That was not done. It was not the "garrison duty" men whom I held responsible for our waning *moral*, but to a large extent the drafts sent out from home. [The Author.]

D.

Roedern: If it is doubtful whether we can hold the Danube front there is danger that the petrol supply will cease. What of the stock?

Ludendorff: Navy ten months, army (for aircraft) two months.

Note.—This question was discussed again on October 17. A joint administration of the naval and military supplies was decided upon. The army was thus in a better position than it had been on October 9.

There was a further improvement when the U-boat campaign stopped.

E.

During my private discussion with the Imperial Chancellor I put the question as to what the German people were prepared to do for the army. I considered that a strong propaganda at home was our first requirement, in order to prepare the nation for the coming, and if necessary final, life and death struggle.

13.

OUR SECOND NOTE, ON OCTOBER 12, APPROVED BY MAIN HEADQUARTERS.

"Berlin,

"October 12, 1918.

"In reply to the question of the President of the United States the German Government makes the following declarations:

"The German Government has accepted the principles which President Wilson laid down in his message of January 8, 1918, and later speeches as the basis of a just and lasting peace. The aim of the negotiations to be initiated would therefore to all intents and purposes be directed to obtaining agreement on the practical details of their application.

"The German Government assumes that the Governments of the Powers allied to the United States also accept President Wilson's declaration as the basis.

"In agreement with the Government of Austria-Hungary the German Government declares that it is ready to fulfil the President's demands for the evacuation of occupied territory as the preliminary to an armistice. They leave it to the President's discretion to suggest the formation of a mixed commission whose duty it would be to arrange the necessary conventions for the evacuation.

"The present German Government, which is responsible for the peace overtures, has been formed after negotiation and in agreement with the great majority of the Reichstag. The Imperial Chancellor, supported in all his actions by the will of that majority, speaks in the name of the German Government and the German people.

(Signed) "SOLF,
"Secretary of State
for Foreign Affairs."

14.

TELEGRAM FROM THE SUPREME COMMAND TO THE IMPERIAL CHANCELLOR ON OCTOBER 14.

"*I feel it my duty to tell your Grand-Ducal Highness of my great anxiety that the present state of public opinion in the Empire is continuing to prejudice the military situation and our prospects in any negotiations. Our lack of unity and waning 'moral' at home give our enemies fresh strength to continue their attacks and renewed determination to raise their demands. Foreign countries, both hostile and neutral, are beginning to regard us as a nation which will no longer give its all for its honour.*

"To combat this state of affairs we must stop at nothing to secure that one united patriotic impulse shall sweep through every fraction of the German nation and reveal itself

patently to the whole world. *No one must be in the slightest doubt about the absolute determination of the nation to defend itself to the last against any humiliating conditions. Only thus will the army find the strength to withstand so great a numerical superiority.* Only thus will our representatives find the requisite backing for their heavy task at the conference table.

"I therefore regard it as absolutely necessary that the terrible consequences of a peace at any price shall be clearly revealed to every single German through the whole Press, party meetings, all professional associations and trade unions, the churches, schools, theatres and cinematographs. *Public speeches of all kinds must reveal our determination that there shall only be two paths for the German people—a peace with honour or a fight to the bitter end!*

"Our conviction of the justice of our cause, pride in our mighty achievements during the last four years against the strongest coalition in history, the feeling that we have always kept faith with our allies and an unshakable confidence in Germany's future must accompany us into peace and enable us to keep our respect for ourselves and the respect of foreign countries. That is the only tone worthy of our Press and our speeches.

"As regards the field army and the garrison troops I will do what is required in this respect. The War Ministry has received a copy, with the request to work in the same sense in the armies at home.

"This telegram had been written out when I first heard of the statements of Secretary of State Erzberger to the 'Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung.' I welcomed those statements, in which the Secretary of State calls on the nation to stand together as one man. But there must be a real effort to influence the nation along the lines I have mentioned if we are to have the patriotic impulse which the hour demands.

(Signed) "VON HINDENBURG,
Field-Marshal."

(No. 71233 IV.)

15.

WILSON'S SECOND NOTE, ON OCTOBER 14.

"State Department,
"14th October.

"SIR,

"In reply to the communication of the German Government, dated 12th October, which you handed to me to-day, I have the honour to request you to transmit the following:

"The unqualified acceptance by the present German Government and a large majority of the German Reichstag of the terms laid down by the President of the U.S.A. in his address of 8th January, 1918, and in his subsequent addresses, justifies the President in making a frank and direct statement of his decision with regard to the communications of the German Government dated 3rd and 12th October, 1918.

"It must be clearly understood that the process of evacuation and the execution of the conditions of an armistice are matters which must be left to the judgment and advice of the military advisers of the Government of the U.S.A. and the Allied Governments, and the President feels it his duty to say that no arrangement can be accepted by the Government of the U.S.A. which does not provide absolutely satisfactory safeguards and guarantees for the maintenance of the present military supremacy of the armies of the U.S.A. and of the Allies in the field. He feels confident that he can safely assume that this will also be the judgment and decision of the Allied Governments.

"The President feels that it is also his duty to add that neither the Government of the United States, nor, he is quite sure, the Governments with which the Government of the U.S.A. is associated as a belligerent, will consent to consider an armistice so long as the armed forces of Germany continue the illegal and inhuman practices in which they still persist.

"At the very time when the German Government approaches the Government of the United States with proposals of peace, its submarines are engaged in sinking passenger ships at sea—and not the ships alone, but also the boats in which their passengers and crew seek to make their way to safety. Also, in their present enforced withdrawal from Flanders and France, the German armies are pursuing a course of wanton destruction which has always been regarded as a direct violation of the rules and practices of civilized warfare. Cities and villages, if not destroyed, are being stripped of all they contain, often even of their inhabitants. The nations associated against Germany cannot be expected to agree to an armistice as long as acts of inhumanity, spoliation and desolation are being continued, which they justly look upon with horror and with burning hearts.

"It is also necessary, in order that there may be no possibility of misunderstanding, that the President should very solemnly call the attention of the German Government to the language and plain intent of one of the terms of peace which the German Government has now accepted. It is contained in the address of the President delivered at Mount Vernon on the 4th July last.

"It is as follows:

"'The destruction of every military power anywhere that can separately, secretly and of its single choice destroy the peace of the world, or, if it cannot at present be destroyed, at least its reduction to virtual impotency.'

"The power which has hitherto controlled the destiny of the German nation is one of those which the President has in mind in making this statement. It is within the choice of the German nation to alter it. The President's words just quoted naturally constitute a condition which must be fulfilled before peace, if peace is to come by the action of the German people themselves. The President feels bound to say that, in his judgment, the whole process of peace will depend upon

the definiteness and satisfactory character of the guarantee which can be given in this fundamental matter. It is indispensable that the Governments associated against Germany should know beyond a peradventure with whom they are dealing. The President will make a separate reply to the Royal and Imperial Government of Austria.

"I have the honour to remain, etc.,

(Signed) "ROBERT LANSING."

16.

EXTRACT FROM THE MEETING OF THE WAR CABINET ON OCTOBER 16.

Von Payer drew attention to the fact that the Supreme Command was suggesting that propaganda in favour of the final defensive effort should be begun. The Cabinet considered that the time had *not yet** come. The Cabinet must first decide what was to be done with regard to Wilson's note. Meanwhile, public meetings and speeches on the situation were undesirable. We must know for certain whether troops could be brought from the East.

Colonel von Haeften remarked that His Excellency Ludendorff would be in Berlin next day. The questions which were to be put to him would be drawn up by the War Minister. But the Supreme Command themselves were asking for a reply to the following questions:

1. Is the position at home such that we could transfer all our troops in the east to the west, or is there a danger that we shall have Bolshevism in our own country?

2. *Would the German nation, not only educated circles, but the broad masses, throw itself whole-heartedly into the struggle if it knew that in that case our position would be strong enough from a military point of view to prevent our enemies from crossing our frontier; or is the moral resolution of our people so exhausted*

* The italics are mine. [The Author.]

that that question cannot be unconditionally answered in the affirmative? Voluntary action, not compulsion, is what is meant.

(After October 9, I had been discussing these two questions with Colonel von Haeften continuously. They had no direct connection with the telegram from the Supreme Command. Colonel von Haeften also put these questions without reference to the telegram, and solely with a view to inducing the Government to make a clear pronouncement as a supplement to the questions which were to be put to me. As shown below, Secretary of State Solf put the telegram and the two questions together and represented them as the same document.—The Author.)

Secretary of State Solf described the telegram of Main Headquarters in which these questions were put as an extremely dangerous document. Between the lines one could read not merely an appeal to the German nation to close up its ranks but an attempt to shift responsibility. Why was public opinion so depressed? Because our military power had been broken. They were now trying to say that our military power would collapse if our national *moral* did not hold out. This attempt to shift responsibility could not be permitted. It was inconsistent with General Ludendorff's own words when he agreed with the War Minister that a *levée en masse* was impossible.*

Equally dangerous was the second question: Whether we could withdraw our troops from the east at the risk of having Bolshevism. If the answer was in the negative the Supreme Command would allege that they could have saved the military situation if they had had these reinforcements. Did they really believe that the small body of troops from the east could change the situation as regards relative numbers? The Field-Marshal must be asked to refrain from sending such telegrams in future.

* I gather from this statement that Secretary of State Solf cannot have followed what I said on October 9. [The Author.]

Scheidemann: The matter must be thoroughly thrashed out with General Ludendorff. He also thought that there was an idea of distorting the true facts. In any case the telegram from Main Headquarters had been sent before Wilson's reply was known. They were now apparently expecting help from the appeal to public opinion. That could be understood, but we must not let ourselves be deceived, but must try to look at the position from the enemy's point of view and appreciate the real situation without illusions. . . .

Did they really think that there was still enough sentiment in the nation for any one to raise a finger to keep the Kaiser? . . .

The U-boat campaign ought to be stopped at once. The few ships which were still being sunk were not worth considering.

(Thus, according to the White Book, Secretary Scheidemann was the first to talk quite frankly of the abdication of the Kaiser, as he was the first to use the word "revolution" before the whole of Europe in the Reichstag. He also comes forward as the first member of the Cabinet of National Defence to advocate putting a stop to the submarine campaign.—The Author.)

Groeber shared Herr Solf's views on the telegram from Main Headquarters. He did not think that we had any large body of troops available in the east.

Note.—I was not told at the time of what happened at the sitting of October 16, in order that our personal relations should not be disturbed to the prejudice of common co-operation. Colonel Haeften went so far as to doubt whether I knew of the telegram of October 14, as he wished to compose differences and facilitate further co-operation. In this Colonel Haeften had a proper idea of his position.

Had I known what transpired on October 16 I should have considered my own position with regard to the Secretaries of State, with a view to dissipating their notions. The Field-Marshal would have taken the same course.

17.

CONFERENCES IN BERLIN ON OCTOBER 17

(Abbreviated.)

A.

The Main Sitting.

Present:

The Imperial Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor, the War Minister, the Secretaries of State of the Foreign Office, the Imperial Treasury, the Admiralty, the Chief of the Naval Staff, the Vice-President of the Prussian Cabinet, Secretaries of State Groeber, Haussmann, Scheidemann, Under-Secretaries of State Goppert, von Stumm and Wahnschaffe, Ministerialdirektor Deutelmoser, General Ludendorff, General Hoffmann, Colonel Heye.

The Imperial Chancellor: The position in which we find ourselves is the consequence of the step we took on October 5. At that time the Supreme Command was exceedingly anxious that we should address the peace note and armistice proposals to President Wilson. As a reply the question was put to us which we have answered. We have now received a further note which contains higher demands by Wilson and about which we have to make up our minds. Wilson has obviously been put in a difficult position through the American Chauvinists and pressure from France and England, and I believe that he himself hopes that we will make it possible for him to continue negotiating with us and overcome the opposition of the war party.

That is how I judge the situation. We have now to be quite clear as to what Germany's military situation requires before we reply to Wilson's note. For that purpose we have invited Your Excellencies to come here and give us information. We have put a number of precise questions before Your Excellencies and we expect to receive information on

the points raised. Your Excellencies have put other questions to us and these will be answered in the course of the discussion. The first question is this: If the divisions can be transferred from the east can the western front be so strengthened that we can rely on holding out for a considerable time?

The second question is: Whether by a large reinforcement of man-power from home the army will be enabled to hold out further.

*General Ludendorff:** The whole series of questions were addressed to me some time back, but it is quite impossible to answer precisely. War is no mathematical problem. It is a matter of probabilities and improbabilities. No man knows what the end will be. When we went to East Prussia in August, 1914, and with the help of my loyal colleague Hoffmann the orders for the Battle of Tannenberg were issued we could not tell what would happen or whether Rennenkampf would march or not. He did not march and the battle was won. A stroke of luck is part of war. Perhaps Germany will again have a stroke of luck like that.

I can only tell you what I think. The responsibility for what I say is mine and I have borne it for four long and critical years.

When I am asked if the divisions from the east could reverse the situation in the west I must reply with the question: What can we take from the east? I have discussed the question with Hoffmann. We have now released three divisions by evacuating White Russia. But that is a slow process. We have large stocks of oats in that region and we shall be particularly short of oats next year. That is very regrettable.

We thus get three divisions. The situation cannot be

* In the Notes to the White Book it says that "A short time back Ludendorff and Heye had themselves declared it would have been a gamble if they had not urged on the peace step; they now say, 'War is no mathematical problem, etc.'" No observant reader could fail to notice the misleading tendencies of the Notes in the White Book. [The Author.]

reversed with three divisions, but the soldier must scrape together everything he can get hold of. We could not do so before because our distant frontiers had to be protected against the Bolshevists until the indemnity was paid. How many divisions have we in the east?

Colonel Heye: Twenty-four still. The Commander-in-Chief in the east has 7 of them.

General Hoffmann: The C.-in-C. has 7, there are 12 in the Ukraine and 5 in Rumania.

General Ludendorff: The question thus arises: Can we leave the Ukraine or not? The Supreme Command, in agreement with the Government, went into the Ukraine because we needed that country's economic resources to supplement our own and had to break our enemies' eastern front. If we can get on without the resources of the Ukraine and risk the danger of its turning Bolshevik we can withdraw our divisions there.

From the economic point of view I believe that the Ukraine is absolutely necessary to us. That is true in a military sense also. We could not carry on the war in the west without horses from the Ukraine. I do not know whether we can get the number required from home. In that case I should have to ask the Government to indicate a line of policy in eastern questions different from that which was given me last March.

The Imperial Chancellor: If we withdrew our troops from the east would the western front become strong enough to hold?

General Ludendorff: That must be true to a certain extent. The only question is whether the economic and political disadvantages as well as the danger at home do not outweigh the advantages.

The Imperial Chancellor: Would the fresh troops increase the offensive capacity of our western armies to such an extent that the enemy could be brought to the conference table?

General Ludendorff: No; these troops have lost their

offensive capacity. We have already withdrawn all their good elements. They have no offensive powers, but would have a certain value for defensive purposes. It must not be forgotten that the troops in the east no longer have the spirit of those in the west. Possibly General Hoffmann could tell us something about this.

The Imperial Chancellor: One more question first. The withdrawal of troops from the east would therefore only postpone the moment which we thought had arrived at the beginning of October, and then the situation would recur which compelled us to make overtures for peace. Is that so?

General Ludendorff: It is all a question of what the homeland can give us. It comes back to the question of man-power.*

The Imperial Chancellor: I will ask General Hoffmann to speak.

General Hoffmann: Our divisions in the east consist of men between 35 and 45. The immense areas they have to hold and the attempts which are made upon them and to which they frequently succumb—either through the bribes of Jewish traders or by Bolshevik propaganda—have done the troops a lot of harm. Before the last formations were sent back we had about one man to every eighteen square kilometres in Lithuania. The troops have been scattered for months in individual posts. They have little supervision and Bolshevik ideas combined with bribes have been too much for them.

We could only give up ten divisions,† for we need two divisions and the cavalry to close the frontier to the Ukraine.

I must confirm that these divisions are of no value for an offensive. They are still good enough for the defensive. They carry out their duties in the east splendidly. I would undertake to carry through an offensive with them in the east.

* And a question of moral determination. [The Author.]

† Two were already on their way. [The Author.]

But they could not be employed against the mechanical resources of our enemies in the west.

The Imperial Chancellor: You therefore think that their withdrawal is possible in itself?

General Hoffmann: If we are going to withdraw them it is certainly high time. I need three months to get our troops from the Ukraine. We could only run two or three trains a day and, owing to the shortage of lubricating oil, not always that number. Further, we must expect sabotage and even revolutionary outbreaks if the railways were served by Ukrainians. At the present moment, if I were willing to leave all the material behind, particularly the harvest, it would take me three days to get the troops to the light railways and six to the normal gauge railways. These periods are calculated on the basis that we can take no supplies with us, and these would thus be lost. The Commanding Officer at Minsk told me that he needed 500 trains to get the harvest away. Of course we have not got them. The troops will therefore have to march.

General Ludendorff: Hitherto, about a million men have been fed from supplies drawn from the east. This burden will now have to be shouldered by the homeland. The requisitions of cattle in the Ukraine have saved our stocks at home. Everyone knows how critical the situation is in Germany with regard to the cattle stocks. If we had to manage without cattle from the east the Quartermaster-General thought that the home country would be faced with the greatest difficulties. I have asked the Government to go thoroughly into this question. We at Main Headquarters have always regarded the cattle question as vital. We have had no less than 140,000 horses from the Ukraine.

The Imperial Chancellor: What about the Bolshevik army; if it gets stronger can it become a menace to us?

General Hoffmann: No; from a purely military point of view it can do nothing to us for any calculable time. We

have nothing to fear in that quarter. But the moral peril!

General Ludendorff: And that peril is a great one. The cordon is so weak that we are not in a position to keep it far from our own country.

The Imperial Chancellor: The upshot is that our offensive capacity in the west will not be increased by the troops from the east, but the twelve divisions available will be useful for defensive purposes. Three months will be required to bring them over. Further, large stocks of oats will be lost and a great number of men who were fed from the east will now have to be fed from home. I will now ask Your Excellencies the question: What importance has the Ukraine in the eyes of the Government for the food supply of Germany?

General Ludendorff: Yes, we have bought a million and a half tons of corn, the transport of which has begun.

The Imperial Chancellor: The discussion is now open.

Count Roedern: The two Secretaries of State of the Imperial Board of Agriculture and the War Food Office are not present. There are differences of opinion between them. The War Food Office wants to exploit the Ukraine further, while the Ministry of Agriculture is very sceptical. As far as I can judge the position from the correspondence which I have seen, the view of the Minister of Agriculture seems to me the sounder of the two. In any case, what we have received from the Ukraine for the civil population is extraordinarily little, and much greater importance must be attached to what it has done for the army which must now be taken over by the home country. Has the army been getting cattle from the Ukraine?

General Ludendorff: No distinction must be made between the army and the civil population. We are all in the same boat economically and it is immaterial whether cattle from the Ukraine are required for the army or the civil population. We must have the cattle, and I rack my brains as to where to

get them from. Moreover, there is the question of raw material for war purposes. We have just lost the copper mines at Bor as the Serbs have recaptured them. When, on top, we evacuate Belgium our industrial situation will be so strained that we shall not know how to continue the war. If we withdraw simultaneously in both east and west we shall collapse altogether.

Secretary of State Solf: The representative of the Foreign Office in the Ukraine yesterday discussed with me the situation there. Of the economic part of his report I will only say that the value of the Ukraine for army supplies is enormous and that it is immaterial who uses those supplies. In any case the economic resources of the country are very considerable.

I then asked Herr von Mumm what would happen in the Ukraine if we withdrew the German troops. He was quite certain that in that case the ravages of the Bolsheviks would be of the most ruthless and terrible description. All wealthy persons would be executed.

General Ludendorff: That risk also will have to be faced—even if it meant violation of our good faith—if the welfare of our German Fatherland required it. Is evacuation necessary for Germany or not? If it is it must be carried out, however terrible its consequences.

Count Roedern: The question can only be answered when we have the harvest figures, which are now available. We thus want the Secretary of the War Food Office.

Scheidemann: If we put all these questions of food supplies and Bolshevism on one side there still remains the question whether the western front will be holding three months hence or whether it will be broken through before that time.

General Ludendorff: I have already told the Imperial Chancellor that I regard a breakdown as possible but not probable. If you ask me on my conscience I can only reply that I do not fear it.

The Imperial Chancellor: I will turn to the second ques-

tion: Is the nation ready to give the General Staff the men they need?

As a preliminary we must know whether it is technically possible to get the men required.

General Ludendorff: That I cannot say. I have been struggling with that question ever since 1916. There has hardly been a month in which I did not put the screw on. As to whether the reinforcements will come in time, reinforcements* always come in time. You can never tell in war how long an action will last. How often have I sent in reserves when it was thought they had come too late, and yet they were in time after all. You have to put them in and leave the rest to fate.

The Imperial Chancellor: Perhaps the War Minister will give his opinion on this question.

War Minister Scheüch: Two measures are for consideration —Normal general recruiting to make good wastage, or one great levy to take its place. As regards the first scheme the following points must be noted: The normal supply of drafts for the field army is 190,000 men per month according to the latest figures for Prussia and the other States. These can be recruited without any very sensible effect on industry, etc. I cannot give the details of the figures here.

If the army is to have one great reinforcement I put the figure at about 600,000 men. I am not putting it too high. The detailed calculation gave exactly 637,000 men. In this case the effect on industry would be very marked. I do not think that there would be any considerable decrease in the output of war material, but private industries, etc., would be ruined. We should also have to consider what number of untrained men we should get. For example, there is the balance of the 1900 class, of which 50,000 were left in civil life. The others are already trained, most of them are in the depots,

* Of course, the word is not used in a strategical or tactical sense. [The Author.]

but one-third at home. That is our very last throw. Training is, of course, necessary for the others.

We now have to consider whether if we send the 600,000 men to the front further reinforcements would be required. In that case we should no longer have about 190,000, but only about 100,000 men for the next six months. If the 1901 class were called up early we could put the further reinforcements up to the autumn of 1919 at 150,000 men. Thus the reservoir for the next year would be exhausted at the end of September.

General Ludendorff: I am entirely in favour of the second course. If we had had these good figures before us earlier we should not have found ourselves faced with a crisis on the western front. If I get these men I can face the future confidently. I must have the men and indeed soon, and if I do we can be hopeful once more.

War Minister Scheüch: I can pledge my word that I will leave no stone unturned to see that these figures are kept to. But we must not lose a single day.

General Ludendorff: I should like to give you gentlemen a review of the situation. The day before yesterday there was a battle at Ypres. The English and French attacked with very strong forces. We knew that. We wanted to maintain our front. We saw the danger coming. It was a difficult matter to tell ourselves that we should be forced back and yet must stand fast. We have been forced back, but things have gone well. It is true that there is a gap of four kilometres in the front, but the enemy has not pushed through and we have kept our front together. How vital the reinforcements from home might have been to us!

The strain on the men themselves has reached a stage which cannot be exceeded. Officers and men have a feeling of isolation. When the officer goes away the men say: "Where are you going, sir?" and then run away. If we can stop the gaps we can prevent a breach. If we can tell the

front that reinforcements are coming it will recover its confidence and we too would have no anxiety.

War Minister Scheüch: If I understand General Ludendorff rightly, he says that if we once have a reinforcement the position may fundamentally change.

General Ludendorff: Yes.

War Minister Scheüch: Has it been considered that the Americans will be always getting reinforcements faster than ourselves?

General Ludendorff: We must not overrate the Americans. They are certainly smart. But we have beaten them hitherto, *even when we were very inferior in numbers.** In any case the situation is changing as regards relative numbers. But our men are not anxious about the Americans; they are about the English. We must not let our troops feel isolated.

Colonel Heye: Within what time can the second 600,000-men scheme be carried through?

War Minister Scheüch: I must not fix too short a time. We must certainly get men from industry and agriculture faster than we originally thought we could. The use of the home army is an easier matter. For example, 75,000 men will come from Prussia. I have been exercising pressure in that direction. We must not be too anxious about it. Further, we shall get about 25,000 men from the other States. At first we shall have about 50,000 untrained men and 250,000 trained. But it will take several weeks before they can be employed. Even Main Headquarters will confirm that.

General Ludendorff: It would suit us better if they all came at once. For the really depressing thing for an army is to see its establishment getting lower and lower.

War Minister Scheüch: There are also difficulties due to the transport situation at home. Quite recently in one corps

* For some peculiar reason the official White Book does not give this sentence. [The Author.]

area there were 6,000 men ready to be sent to the western front, but they could not be sent owing to the shortage of rolling-stock. That may occur again.

General Ludendorff: With us, too, the evacuation of the occupied areas had provoked a transport crisis which communicated itself to the homeland. It has now been overcome. I should be only too thankful if the authorities at home do what is humanly possible in this direction.

I now come to another point, which is not on the syllabus—the *moral** of the army. It is very important. His Excellenc, Scheidemann has just referred to the 41st Division and produced a divisional order to it. I am sorry to have to admit that the order was right. The division had completely failed on August 8. That was the black day in Germany's history. The same division is now fighting brilliantly on the east bank of the Meuse. That is a matter of *moral.* The spirit of the division was then bad. It had been a prey to influenza and the potato ration had failed. Nor was the spirit good which the men had brought with them from home. The drafts came out in a condition which was inconsistent with discipline and order. There were cases of open insubordination. I make a practice of talking to officers and men on their arrival. One officer told me on this occasion that he had never before had such experiences as when conducting drafts from the area of the 13th Division of the VIIth Corps. He felt as if he had Russian Bolshevists under him, not German soldiers.

This spirit has been brought into the army from home, and I am quite convinced that, on the other hand, the spirit is equally bad which the men take home with them when they go on leave. I have made desperate efforts to raise it and I must most earnestly request that the spirit of the men is looked after as well as their bodies.

* *Moral* must mean "spirit." It is significant of the questions put by the Government that they did not touch this most important factor. [The Author.]

For example, what about all the *embusqués* in Maubeuge? The fact is that in our great army we have not only heroes to deal with, but weak, miserably weak, men as well. We must get hold of them. New life must be put into the nation! I must most earnestly ask all the authorities concerned to do everything in their power to raise the *moral* of the nation and to impress upon the soldier in Belgium that he is defending German soil. We get reports from many quarters, Gallwitz's army for instance, that the armistice negotiations are having a very bad effect. In Belgium the men are saying: Why should we go on fighting here when we shall only have to evacuate the country? Those fighting at Verdun say: What is the good of all our sacrifices if the French are to get Alsace-Lorraine any how? We cannot use men of poor spirit. Quite recently a Divisional Staff told me that they had had to send their drafts from the east away again as they were no longer any use in the west. We must influence the nation's *moral*."

The Imperial Chancellor: As his Excellency General Ludendorff has broached the question of *moral* it seems to be necessary to ask the three parliamentary Secretaries of State to give us their opinion of the state of feeling at home and tell us what they think of the proposals which have been made.

Secretary of State Groeber: In the summer of this year the *moral* of the nation was certainly very bad. I convinced myself personally of this on a visit to Southern Germany. It is the men coming on leave who are responsible. They tell the most dreadful stories of all kinds at home. Many are false but many are true. These things have greater effect the longer the war lasts. Of course, in a great army there are bound to be many cases of brutality in dealing with the men, but there is room for a good deal of improvement.

The most important matter is the food of the men and officers. Take the officers' canteens, from which the officers can supply themselves with food and delicacies. When the

private comes along he is told: This is not for you. In normal times he does not mind, but at moments like the present he begins to think: Just look what we have to endure, while the officer lives well. Would it not be possible to remove the distinction?

General Ludendorff: I absolutely adhere to the point of view that the officer in the field must live exactly like the men. I have looked into the charge and ascertained from the Intendant-General that there is only one canteen, which is open indifferently to both officers and men. Nor is any distinction made as regards price. At the present time there is the distinction that the small canteens supplement their stocks from the big ones. The big ones supply the small ones at a lower price, so that the small ones make a profit. Now, certain higher staffs had no regimental canteens but satisfied their requirements from the large canteens, and indeed at the lower price. As soon as I had found this out I forbade it, and compelled the members of the Staff to buy from the big canteens at the same price as from the small.

In the trenches, officers and men get their food from the same field kitchen. That other arrangements are made for the Staff is only natural. We can hardly be expected to get our meals from the field kitchen. But we will certainly do everything that is right and equitable.

The worst feature is that rumours get round which touch the honour and reputation of individual officers, and nothing can be done to counteract them. If you will give me details I will take action, but you may be convinced that matters are not as bad as has been alleged. On the whole everything is in order.

The Imperial Chancellor: Please do not go into details, as we have not the time. What do the Secretaries of State think of the opinion in Germany in connection with the measures which the War Minister proposes?

Secretary of State Scheidemann: I certainly think that we

could still mobilize hundreds of thousands of men for the army, but we are deceiving ourselves if we think that these hundreds of thousands will bring a better spirit into the army. I am absolutely convinced of the reverse. The long duration of the war is exhausting the nation as well as the disappointments. We have been deceived about the submarine campaign, the technical superiority of our enemies, our desertion by our allies or their hopeless bankruptcy, as well as by the ever-growing distress at home. We now witness the process of interaction. The men come home on leave with dreadful stories and return to the army with bad news from home. This process depresses public opinion. We should be deceiving ourselves if we tried to gloss it over. The working men are beginning to say that it is better to have a horrible end than an endless horror.

General Ludendorff: Could not Your Excellencies do something to rouse the spirit of the masses?

Secretary of State Scheidemann: It is a question of potatoes. There is no more meat, and we cannot deliver potatoes because we are 4,000 wagons a day short. We have come to an end of our fat. The distress is so great that to ask oneself what Berlin (North) lives on and what Berlin (East) lives on is to ask oneself a riddle. Until we can supply an answer to that riddle it is quite impossible to raise the *moral* of the nation. It would be rank dishonesty to leave anyone in doubt on that point.

Secretary of State Haussmann: There can be no doubt that Parliament will issue an appeal to the nation in the strongest terms and it may have a very great effect. How long, how many weeks, how many days, depends upon the course of coming events. *It was the drastic tone of Wilson's note which first revealed to the nation the whole seriousness of our position. The result was a great clash of opinion. Public opinion could have been roused if we had clearly indicated the shameless demands which could be read between the lines of the note.*

The tone of the negotiations depends upon the amount of time at our disposal, judging by the requirements of the army, before negotiations are opened.

General Ludendorff: If the army survives the next month and we get into winter we shall be "out of the wood." *If we succeed in rousing public opinion during these four weeks it would be extremely valuable from a military point of view.* I will do everything in my power to improve the food supply for the homeland. I will discuss the matter at once with the Director of Railways. I cannot say how far it will be possible.

Secretary of State Scheidemann: The shortage of railway wagons was brought to our notice quite recently and very forcibly by Herr von Waldow. He told us incidentally that very soon we should not even have the small potato ration which is now allowed.

General Ludendorff: I will do what is necessary.

Vice-Chancellor von Payer: I am not so pessimistic as His Excellency Scheidemann. We must draw a distinction. I remember what was the state of public opinion in the summer. No one then doubted that in the long run we should emerge victoriously from the war, but the nation was thoroughly tired of the war and its *moral* was therefore bad. Yet in spite of all that no one thought we could be defeated.

Thus, when we sent our first note people asked themselves what was the matter. Things did not seem to be going too well. Doubts began to rise. When the second Wilson note arrived public opinion collapsed from shock, and it was seen that our very existence was at stake. But even this state of mind changed. When it was realized that we as a nation were faced with destruction, particularly in an economic sense, everyone said to himself: Must we submit to that, or is there still a possibility of averting such a fate? If we now say to the nation: There is still a chance of averting this fate, if

* Only so far as was in my power. [The Author.]

you will only hold out. But if you cannot hold on a few weeks more you must face the possibility that Germany may practically cease to be a nation. You must expect a burden in the shape of indemnities which will crush us out of existence. In that case the spirit of the nation could be raised once more.

If we succeeded in framing the note in such a way that the nation could feel certain that though our position is difficult we have not yet thrown away our arms, all will not be lost.

General Ludendorff: The Vice-Chancellor has said exactly what was in my mind. The only question is: How can we do it? I can only repeat my earnest request: Work up the nation! Sweep it off its feet! Can't Herr Ebert do that? It *must* be done!

Vice-President Friedberg: Whatever we do must be done very quickly. The position has been very critical of late. We have recently seen a meeting of the *Oberpräsidenten*.* All the Protestant clergy in Berlin have been in conference. The parties have been holding party conferences. No one knows where he is and the whole nation is asking itself how it could find itself faced with such a catastrophe so suddenly. We were invited to say that the position was serious but not yet desperate. You could not raise the *moral* of a nation in that way.

General Ludendorff: Certainly not.

Vice-President Friedberg: We are now told that the situation is quite otherwise. In that case I agree with His Excellency von Payer that we must at once make such use as can be made of Wilson's note.

The Imperial Chancellor: Your Excellency thinks that what is required is a firm front for a month?

General Ludendorff: I should have preferred longer. In any case the crisis will then be over on the western front, even

* An *Oberpräsident* is the Lord Lieutenant of a Prussian province. [Tr.]

if we have to retreat. We feel that instinctively. In the last few days the offensive capacity of the enemy has been but small.

The Imperial Chancellor: But in eight or ten days there will be another wave, as Your Excellency told me yourself in conversation.

General Ludendorff: There will be a fresh wave. A fresh attack on the 18th army is already in progress. I do not know how it is going. To-morrow there will be another on the 5th. It never stops.

The Imperial Chancellor: It all comes back to this—that the measures which you recommend will bolt the door against these attacks so that we shall be free to get on with our political task. Your Excellency knows that I did not approve of the peace note at the time; but I was told that every hour cost us so many hundred thousand men that there might be a catastrophe any minute.* His Excellency von Hintze is my witness.

His Excellency von Hintze: That is so, Your Highness.

General Ludendorff: Even to-day the situation is such that we might be broken through and defeated at any moment. Yesterday things went well; they might go badly to-morrow.

The Imperial Chancellor: If you say that our position will be better in a month the English are also saying that if this goes on for another six weeks there will be no more need to negotiate with the Germans. The Entente are certainly doing everything they possibly can to prolong our negotiations with Wilson.

General Ludendorff: The Entente have got wind of what is going on in Berlin and it has greatly increased their eagerness to press home their offensive. But I certainly

* The word "catastrophe" was never mentioned on the military side. Judging by Herr von Hintze's reply I can only assume that it was he who used it. I do not remember now what words I used. The minutes do not show. Perhaps the following reply of the Imperial Chancellor explains the matter to a certain extent. I leave the solution to the reader and refer him more particularly to Vol. II. of my reply to the White Book. [The Author.]

think that every military reinforcement of our front would strengthen Your Highness's hands for the peace negotiations.

The Imperial Chancellor: That is true.

General Ludendorff: I cannot say whether the reinforcements will arrive in time or not. I repeat that anything that comes will be welcome.

The Imperial Chancellor: What is the strength of the army in the west?

Colonel Heye: There are 191 divisions, including 4 Austrian and 7 from the east, on the western front. Their strengths are very unequal. Twenty-eight divisions have battalion strengths of only 200 to 300 men. In the rest the battalion strength is approximately 400 to 500.

General Ludendorff: If all our battalions were at full strength the situation would be safe.

. . . . . .

Vice-Chancellor von Payer: The Secretary of State of the War Food Office has just arrived.

The Imperial Chancellor: I will ask the Secretary of State to answer the question.*

Secretary of State von Waldow: If the question is put in that form I can answer it with a pure negative. In our economic organization we have used the food supplies and fodder of the Ukraine as a stopgap and to improve our position, but if it came to a question of life and death we could give up the Ukraine and would then try to increase our supplies by getting contraband through.

General Ludendorff: I must draw attention to the fact that at the present moment we are feeding about a million men from the east whom in that case we should have to feed ourselves.

Secretary of State von Waldow: In that case I must be told what is the amount of food in question.

* See p. 665.

General Ludendorff: I will get the Quartermaster-General to clear up the position with you. The War Food Office has told us time after time that we must keep the Ukraine. There must be no uncertainty on this point. If we do not need the Ukraine for our very existence,* it is purely a question of how many troops we need to keep the danger of Bolshevism from our frontiers.

Secretary of State von Waldow: When I agreed that the Ukraine was vital to us the situation was very different.

General Ludendorff: If we give up the Ukraine it will paralyse our stock-farming. That question, however, is not so urgent. Austrian troops are on their way to Rumania from the Ukraine also. The decisions we come to must be absolutely clear.

Under-Secretary of State Goppert: One of our commissioners from Kieff, to whom I spoke a few hours ago, confirmed that there was no hope of getting any considerable amount of corn from the Ukraine this winter. The prices too would prevent it.†

Moreover, the supply of other foods is not great enough to be considered seriously in organizing the food supplies of the German nation. On the other hand, everyone is convinced that the withdrawal of the German troops would result in an immediate outbreak of Bolshevism with all its consequences. The point of crystallization for the subsidence of the Russian ferment would disappear, the whole of Russia would be delivered over to Bolshevism and our ties with South Russia would be severed. That must also be considered.

The Imperial Chancellor: I come now to another question. What is the position with regard to the Entente reserve?

Colonel Heye: Last week the French had 40, the English 25, the Americans 18, the Italians 1. Adding in Portuguese,

* Austria, too, was concerned. [The Author.]

† This betrays the futility of our policy in the Ukraine. [The Author.]

Poles and other auxiliary forces there are 87 divisions in reserve, out of a total strength of 220 divisions.

General Ludendorff: We have 191 divisions on the western front. Thus there is no great disparity in the number of divisions. But there is a great difference in strengths. The French divisions are only weak and their strengths are not materially higher than ours. The English are stronger and the 40 American divisions are very strong. The numerical superiority with which the Entente faces us is therefore not correctly represented by the number of divisions.

The Imperial Chancellor: The eleventh question is: How long can great attacks be expected on the western front?

General Ludendorff: They may go on or they may stop. I do not know.

The Imperial Chancellor: Is there any probability of more Italians being brought to the Western front?

General Ludendorff: It is possible but not probable. The feeling of war weariness in Italy is very strong.

Count Roedern: Is an Italian offensive against Austria impossible?

General Ludendorff: It is not physically impossible. The Italians might come through the Tyrol but we need not anticipate that at the moment. If we did we should only add to the anxieties which face us now. If Italians fight against Germans it will only be on the western front.

The Imperial Chancellor: Must we form a new eastern front?

General Ludendorff: There are three divisions and two Austrian divisions in Serbia, not counting the troops which have gone to the Danube from the Ukraine. There is no danger at the moment, but it might be quite otherwise a week hence.

The Imperial Chancellor: I am thinking of the eastern front against Russia.

General Ludendorff: General Hoffmann thinks that we shall

never find effective troops against us again in that quarter. But we must close the frontiers and protect ourselves against armed bands. It is possible that the Bolsheviks will get swelled heads when we evacuate the Ukraine and declare war upon us. But I do not believe in the possibility of an efficient Red army.

The Imperial Chancellor: The barrier is not strong and hundreds get through.

General Hoffmann: Yes, with and without passports, forged or otherwise.

The Imperial Chancellor: But a military irruption we need not fear.

General Ludendorff: No, I don't believe it is possible in a military sense.

The Imperial Chancellor: There was another question. How many Americans are arriving monthly in France?

Colonel Heye: On the average of recent months, 250,000.

General Ludendorff: In April, May and June the figure was 350,000.

The Imperial Chancellor: Has the figure stopped rising since then?

Colonel Heye: At the beginning of the year it was much lower, about 85,000 per month. Then came a marked rise up to midsummer, and since then it certainly has not increased.

The Imperial Chancellor: What will be the strength of the American Army next spring?

Colonel Heye: The American General Staff puts the present strength of the force at 1,200,000 and calculates that it will be 2,300,000 next spring.

The Imperial Chancellor: Will it have the necessary material?

Colonel Heye: Yes, we must expect so if things go on as they have been doing. The Americans have always been right in their figures.

he Imperial Chancellor: How high is the combatant strength of our enemies in the west put now?

Colonel Heye: It has diminished very greatly with the French, remains at the same level with the English (because they can still draw on their reserves) and it will increase with the Americans.

General Ludendorff: It is very difficult to form an opinion on the question of reserves.

Last year the English divisions had still twelve battalions, while to-day they have only nine. It depends very much on the economic situation. For example, after the defeat in March England had to call up miners. If she now withdraws them owing to the shortage of coal it will naturally weaken the front. Political factors also play a part. Until recently Irishmen could not be called up as the Military Service Act did not apply.

The Imperial Chancellor: It comes to this, that while we shall get a reinforcement of 600,000 to 700,000 men before next spring our enemies will get 1,100,000, counting the Americans alone. It is possible that they will get Italians as well. Will our position thus be worse or better next spring?

General Ludendorff: Judging by numbers only it will not be worse. But in addition there is the effect of the evacuation on our economic position. If we withdraw, our war industries will be in a very much worse position. We could always assume that if we came out of the war with our present frontier we should be in a much worse position than before from a military, political and industrial point of view. That will be seen to be the case also if we now evacuate the occupied districts.

The Imperial Chancellor: Up to now Your Excellency has only been considering the question of men, but we must not lose sight of the question of material—aircraft, tanks and so on.

General Ludendorff: The numbers of the aviators on the

two sides are now as one to three, but notwithstanding this it is we who have the upper hand in the air. The figures of enemy losses which we published are a long way short of the true figures, as we are frequently able to confirm from the enemy's reports. I have no fear for this department.

The Imperial Chancellor: What about the tanks next spring?

General Ludendorff: I hope that when our infantry recovers itself even the fear of tanks which was overcome some time ago and has made itself felt again will be overcome once more. On August 8 the tanks came at top speed through the fog and who knows what else. But once the troops have recovered their *moral* many units, such as the Jaeger battalions and Guard Infantry regiments, turn tank shooting into a kind of sport. Further, they are attractive prey on material grounds, as good food can always be found in them. At first we could not keep pace in the construction of tanks because we had to construct motor-lorries first, but by next spring we shall have made progress.

Count Roedern: I assume that the situation will improve if there is a pause in the operations, or does General Ludendorff's opinion hold good if in the next two or three months we are forced into a fighting retreat from our lines on the western front?

General Ludendorff: That depends on the rate of retirement. Every withdrawal costs us prisoners and material in proportion to its speed. During the slow retirement of the 3rd, 1st, 7th, and 18th armies we had practically no losses in men and material. But when we have to give way, as the 17th and 2nd armies gave way, we suffer great losses. As regards the main question, we shall shorten our line to an extraordinary degree, but the position of the army from the point of view of its requirements for operations, munitions, and so on, will be very much worse because our industrial centres will be exposed to hostile aircraft.

If we get as far as armistice negotiations and accept the

demand for evacuation it will mean a material change for the worse in the military situation.

War Minister Scheüch: It must be admitted that the withdrawal of our army to our own frontiers will impair its efficiency enormously, not only because it will make it more difficult to produce everything the army requires for fighting but also because it will affect the spirit and bearing of the troops. Its close proximity to the home population, which is depressed by its severe privations, will in turn depress the army. Along the whole frontier the same conditions will obtain that are now seen in Alsace. Even worse.* Moreover, the standard of living of the civil population would be seriously lowered.

Admiral Scheer: I explained yesterday what was the state of affairs in the navy, but must say something about the condition of the fleet here, because the question is whether we can accept an armistice on the conditions Wilson imposes.

In the last two years the fleet has been employed exclusively in the service of the U-boat campaign and has always been in full fighting trim. If the labour situation had been better we could have doubled or even trebled the construction of submarines. Wilson now demands that we put a stop to the U-boat campaign. If we give way we shall give up a great lever against the enemy which is also a *quid pro quo* for the acceptance of the armistice. For I believe the situation is such that the army can hold out. For that reason we need not accept Wilson's second condition.

The Imperial Chancellor: Your Excellency was speaking of 40,000 workmen whom you required. Could you get them if the War Minister called up 600,000 men?

Admiral Scheer: We shall only want 15,000 to 16,000 before December 1.

* France had suffered those conditions for four years, and for Rumania and Serbia things had been even worse. [The Author.]

The Imperial Chancellor: By when will you need the 40,000?

Admiral Scheer: Not before the summer. With the first 16,000 we could raise the monthly figure of launchings from 10 to 16.

The Imperial Chancellor: As a final word, may I put the following question:

If all the measures are adopted which Your Excellency has proposed, and if the front holds during the next few months, does Your Excellency think that next year we shall be in any better position than we are now?

We must fully realize that any effort we make now which does not pay for itself in the end means effort wasted and will create a situation for which we are responsible and must keep steadily before our eyes. Could we end the war next year on any better terms than now?

General Ludendorff: Every effort we make now will improve our position.

Admiral Scheer: There is a very general impression that our enemies, especially Italy, are feeling the effects of the submarine campaign very acutely. It will become worse for them, especially America, very shortly. But if we accept the conditions which are imposed we abandon everything.

The Imperial Chancellor: That is no answer to the question I put. Shall we end the war on better terms if we give way to the wishes of the Supreme Command? We are not at the moment concerned with the reply to Wilson's note.

Admiral Scheer: Our position will get better because the enemy's will get worse. It is for that reason that our enemies want to end the war this autumn.

Count Roedern: It has so often been said that the food situation among our enemies has become worse, but we have not noticed that it has had any particular effect on the war. Is there now going to be so great a change? Has it been considered that we are losing the coast of Flanders and that

Austria is about to make peace, so that we shall also lose our U-boat bases in the Mediterranean? Can the increase in the rate of submarine construction make up for that?

Admiral Scheer: In my opinion and that of my colleagues the loss of the U-boat bases in Flanders and the Mediterranean will have no effect on our submarine operations. On the contrary, the more we concentrate on the neighbourhood of the British Isles the more effective will our operations become. Hitherto we have kept the way open to England, but only by great efforts.

Of course, I cannot say exactly what time the enemy's collapse will be brought about. It all comes back to intensifying the effects we have already produced and keeping up the pressure upon him. If we do that we shall soon see the political effect.

Count Roedern: It has been said of the naval authorities, no doubt without foundation, that they have made definite promises with regard to the results of the submarine campaign. But surely *one* definite promise was made—that it would prevent the arrival of the American troops. It is just that promise which has not been kept. The then Secretary of the Imperial Admiralty answered the question more or less in these words: Let the Americans come; they will form a welcome target for us. That view has proved utterly erroneous.

Are the effects on England's economic situation to be put as high as has been suggested? The moment the Americans decide to send only 150,000 men a month instead of 250,000 supply to England would be greatly facilitated. There must be some source of error somewhere. May it be that the American rate of shipbuilding has been under-estimated?

Admiral Scheer: I only know of the Secretary of State's declaration through the newspapers. I only know that he did not put the number of American troops very high, probably because he regarded their maintenance on French soil as a difficult matter. U-boats cannot be employed exclusively

against transports. They must use their torpedoes where there is the most tonnage to be destroyed.

(The Imperial Chancellor leaves the chair to the Vice-Chancellor.)

Vice-Chancellor von Payer: The impression of the military situation to-day is thus materially better than at the beginning of the month. Are the reasons of a military nature?

General Ludendorff: At the front the enemy's attacks of yesterday and the day before have not succeeded. The enemy did not come on with his usual ardour. If he had done everything he could we should have been beaten. At these points the fighting power of the Entente has not been up to its previous levels.

Further, the Americans are suffering severely from influenza. It is beginning to play havoc with us also, and indeed in a very bad form. Our troops are tired, and tired troops fall victims to epidemics more easily than fresh ones.

(The Imperial Chancellor resumes the chair.)

The Imperial Chancellor: We are thus no longer in the position which compelled us on October 5 to make peace overtures to Wilson.*

General Ludendorff: I think that before we accept the conditions of this note, which are too hard, we should tell our enemies that they must fight for such conditions.

The Imperial Chancellor: And when they have fought for them, may they not impose even harder terms?

General Ludendorff: Could they be worse?

The Imperial Chancellor: Oh yes! They might invade Germany and lay waste the country.

General Ludendorff: We haven't got to that stage yet.

Count Roedern: Hitherto only victory or defeat has been considered. There is a third alternative—that we slowly

* This reveals the Imperial Chancellor's total misconception of the situation. The real issue was now whether the German nation was ready to face the final life and death struggle. I therefore left his allegation alone and went straight to the root of the matter.

retire. This is the most likely of all if we need not fear that our enemies will break through. Nor do I think it probable that we shall drive them back. Supposing we withdraw, we fill up our ranks and increase our power of resistance. Would America then be compelled to offer us better terms? America knows that we are throwing in our last reserves and would merely bide her time.

General Ludendorff: What are the prospects of the enemy nations? I have a report from an agent that in England and France there is serious anxiety lest the war should continue another month and Germany bring the Entente armies to a standstill on enemy soil. Fears for a reversal of the situation are very lively in those quarters.

Secretary of State Solf: It is my duty and responsibility to advise the Chancellor with regard to the tone and contents of the note which we have to send to Wilson. I am not really better equipped for my task by General Ludendorff's statements than I was before.

At the beginning of this month the Government was pressed by the Supreme Command to ask our enemies for an armistice and make peace proposals. The Imperial Chancellor, against his will and against his personal opinion, had to decide to accept responsibility for the step. Next came Wilson's question in reply, and even then we adhered to the view that in answering Wilson we should simply stand by the terms we had proposed. We now receive a reply from Wilson which forces us to take serious decisions, and immediately the picture changes. It is said that the *status quo* can be maintained and if we get through the next month we shall be in a better position than before.

We are thus presented with a puzzle. What is the real reason why what was previously declared to be impossible can be done now?*

* I did not understand the Secretary of State's suggestion that Main Headquarters was trying to shift its responsibility because I was not told about his statements on the 16th. I realize it for the first time to-day. [The Author.]

General Ludendorff: I have always said that the shortage of men was the most important factor. I hear to-day that the shortage is not so great as I thought. I hear that within a calculable period I can have 600,000 men. I will not stop to ask why I could not have had them before. If I get them now there will be an end to the isolation of the army. In spite of the unfortunate events at the front the situation is changing because the fighting powers of the enemy are waning at the same time.

Now, as then, I believe that we must enter into negotiations for an armistice if that course is at all possible. But we can only accept such armistice terms as permit a systematic evacuation of the country and therefore allow us at least two to three months. Even then we could not accept any terms which seem to make it impossible for us to resume hostilities. Unfortunately the note seems to show that this is the intention. The terms are intended to put us out of the war. Before we go into the matter any further the enemy must tell us what his conditions really are.

We must not break off with Wilson out of hand. On the contrary let us say to him, "Tell us what you really want us to do. If you ask us anything which is a violation of our national honour or if you want to make us incapable of fighting, our answer is definitely *no!*"

In saying this I am not abandoning my previous standpoint. All I ask is that the measures which the War Minister has proposed should be speedily carried through.

Secretary of State Solf: Surely we had these measures in mind at that time.

General Ludendorff: I have been fighting for men ever since April and even longer. They were not given me. It is actually a fact that we are 70,000 men a month short. If this deficit were wiped out and the enemy's fighting power goes on decreasing we need not accept whatever terms the enemy likes to put forward.

The Imperial Chancellor: Could the German General Staff get into direct touch with the American?

General Ludendorff: Foch is in command, not the Americans. Isn't it better to address ourselves first to the Government?

War Minister Scheüch: This is not the time to deal with Foch. It will be an admission of defeat.

General Ludendorff: I should like to put a few more points which the Supreme Command regard as important:

1. ——

2. The Question of Destruction. I have had telegrams from Your Highness and the Foreign Office on this matter. As our duty required we have done everything in our power to keep the army within the limits which can be justified on military grounds. We can no longer accept the responsibility of leaving houses intact, for shelter is a great help to the enemy. The French only destroy the houses later. In Lille we have left the electric light, the water supply and the tramways intact, but the telegraph, telephone and railways have been destroyed. The worst offenders are the English aeroplanes and their long-range guns. We have handed over the material to the Foreign Office.

The army is not the same thing as a few rough individuals who happen to form part of it. The officers struggle against such brutalities. I must ask that in the note to Wilson emphasis is laid on this fact because it is only fair to the army.

Secretary of State Scheidemann: As all kinds of slanders of our army are being spread broadcast in enemy countries, and particularly among neutrals, we must take counter-measures. I think I ought to suggest to Your Highness that it would have a very good effect if we supplemented previous orders with another that there was to be no destruction. It is comprehensible enough to take away the cow, for the troops must live, but we must stop practices which are unnecessary (of which we hear to our regret from men on leave), such as

destroying furniture, cutting out pictures and smashing up beds.

General Ludendorff: We have had four years of trench warfare and have had to build hutments and wooden barracks. The troops needed barracks and rest camps and could not have had them if the hutments and barracks remained empty. They had to be furnished and that is why the furniture was requisitioned. I consider that permissible on military grounds. How otherwise would the troops get any rest? I am afraid there have been a good many mistakes. We have taken drastic steps against them.

Unfortunately, the moment the troops leave the civil population start looting. We cannot leave guards behind. A good many bad cases have been brought to our notice. That is unfortunately true. But officially the use of furniture is only permitted for billets.

We have brought away securities or taken charge of them. They will be given back. We have removed to Valenciennes the contents of all picture galleries. We wanted to take them further back in order to protect them better, but left them in French territory at the request of the Foreign Office.

The Imperial Chancellor: Could we not send them to Holland?

General Ludendorff: We have been in close and constant touch with the Foreign Office on this matter and examined it from the point of view of international law. The Foreign Office said they must not be taken out of the country as that would be stealing. The only exceptions are church property and plate, which we have handed over to the Archbishop of Cologne for safe keeping.

The Imperial Chancellor: Is there anything else to be said about the questions which we put to His Excellency Ludendorff?

In that case I declare the sitting at an end.

4

I cannot recognize the details of the minutes of the second sitting on October 17. I never used such language. The substance is accurately reproduced. I will give the following extracts, which also correspond to the form of what I said.

Solf: The question is whether we should choose a somewhat stronger form* which is more consonant with our dignity, even at the risk of Wilson's breaking off negotiations. Can we accept such responsibility?

Ludendorff: Yes, we can, and if we reply to the new note in a sharper tone and Wilson breaks off we shall see that it was never honourably meant.

The Imperial Chancellor resisted the last suggestion. According to the reports he had received Wilson really wanted peace, but was under pressure from England and France.

Ludendorff desired that Wilson should be asked to say something about the conditions. The note must be a test whether it was honourably meant and whether he was strong enough to impose his will on his allies.

Colonel Heye explained his previous statement. It was his opinion that, taking the position as a whole, there had been no change in the situation. The army needed a pause in the operations and the sooner it came the better. When the Supreme Command decided that peace overtures could be made they started from the assumption that an honourable peace could be concluded. Now [for the first time]† we see‡ that it is a matter of to be or not to be. We must therefore go into the question whether we are to embark upon this life and death struggle. The Supreme Command still regards the situation as uncertain, even to-day. We cannot guarantee that the 18th Army§ will not suffer a serious

* For the reply to Wilson's note. [The Author.]

† The brackets are mine. [The Author.]

‡ I.e., the whole world. [The Author.]

§ On the 17th it had been engaged in a critical and costly action. [The Author.]

defeat, though things have gone well during the last week. The enemy will certainly make further and heavier attacks, but his numbers are diminishing. Recent actions have now proved it. He will continue his attempts to defeat us with the help of his artillery and his many tanks. We shall suffer heavy losses. If we retire fighting the land must be laid waste, for we must create a safety zone between the enemy and ourselves.

It is possible that the enemy will attack in Lorraine. We are taking counter measures against it.

The situation is serious but not hopeless. The *moral* of the army would be raised if our offer were rejected by the Entente. It would be a great moral impetus to us. We must accept a final life and death struggle if the conditions proposed to us are derogatory of our honour.

Our prospects of holding the front in Alsace are good. Older troops are holding the first line, though the second is held by exhausted divisions only. It is thus merely a question of how long the fighting will last.

Ludendorff: With these older troops the value of a good peace training makes itself felt. Older men always show what good peace training has done for them, and so I am confident that the fronts in Lorraine and Alsace will be held. We must also bear in mind that the Entente troops too are very exhausted.

18.

On October 19 the Imperial Government trod the path of capitulation in spite of the opposition of some of the Secretaries of State, the views of the Imperial Chancellor and the Reichstag on October 5, and in spite of my attitude on the 17th. The proceedings at this sitting must be made known.

TELEGRAM FROM THE SUPREME COMMAND AT 1 P.M. ON OCTOBER 20, 1918

"There has been no change in the situation. Turkey has opened separate negotiations. Austria-Hungary will soon follow. We shall very soon be alone in Europe. The western front is suffering the greatest strain. A break through is possible, though I am not afraid of it. If we could break away from our enemies in Belgium and the promised reinforcements were forthcoming a durable resistance could be organized which would prolong the campaign in the west and save us from the worst, even if it did not give us a patent victory. But even if we were defeated we should not be materially worse off than if we now accepted all the conditions.

"*The question we now have to put is this: Will the German nation now fight to the last man for its honour, not only with words but with deeds, and thereby make a recovery possible, or will it allow itself to be forced into capitulation, which means downfall, before it has made its supreme effort?*

"*If we abandoned the U-boat campaign by the concession in our note without any compensation we should take the second course.*

"It would have an extremely unfavourable effect on the *moral* of our army, which is being very severely tried by the hard fighting. For this reason I cannot agree with the note on this point. If the Government accepts this view it must assume that the negotiations with Wilson will be broken off and must therefore decide to continue the struggle to the last man for the sake of our honour.

"Notwithstanding the extremely serious situation of the army I can think of no other way, and I earnestly hope that in taking this critical decision the Government will have the whole Fatherland behind them. . . .

(Signed) "VON HINDENBURG."

19.

THE THIRD GERMAN NOTE OF OCTOBER 20

"In accepting the proposal to evacuate the occupied areas the German Government adopted the standpoint that the method of carrying out this evacuation and the terms of the armistice should be left to military advisers and that the present relative strength at the front is to form the foundations of agreements which are to maintain and guarantee it. The German Government leaves it to the President to fix a time for settling details. It trusts that the President will refuse to associate himself with any demands which would be incompatible with the honour of the German nation and the establishment of a peace of justice.

"The German Government repudiates the charge of illegal and inhuman conduct which is made against the German military and naval forces and thus against the German people itself.

"A certain amount of destruction work is always necessary to cover a retreat, and to that extent is permissible by international law. The German troops have the strictest instructions to respect private property and give the civil population what help it can. Where offences against these regulations are committed those guilty of them are punished.

"The German Government also repudiates the suggestion that when ships are sunk by German naval forces their boats with their occupants are intentionally destroyed.

"The German Government proposes that neutral commissions should look into these cases and ascertain the real facts.

"In order to prevent anything which might hamper the efforts for peace the German Government have issued orders to all submarine commanders forbidding the torpedoing of passenger ships. For technical reasons it cannot however guarantee that these orders will reach *all* submarines now at sea before their return.

"As a fundamental basis of peace the President indicates the destruction of every military power anywhere that can separately, secretly and of its single choice disturb the peace of the world. To this the German Government replies that hitherto in the German Empire the representatives of the people have had no influence upon the formation of the Government. The constitution gave the people's representatives no voice in the question of peace or war. There has now been a fundamental change in this matter. The new Government has been formed with the entire approval of a parliament elected by equal, universal, secret and direct suffrage. It includes among its members the leaders of the great parties in the Reichstag. In future no government can take or retain office which does not enjoy the confidence of the Reichstag majority. The responsibility of the Imperial Chancellor to Parliament is being fixed and secured by the constitution. The first act of the new Government was to lay a bill before the Reichstag, a bill to change the Imperial Constitution by providing that the assent of Parliament is required to all decisions on war and peace.

"The guarantee for the permanence of the new system is not only these legal provisions but also the firm determination of the German people, the great majority of whom are behind these reforms and mean to see them carried through.

"Thus the President's question as to with whom he and the Governments allied against Germany have to deal is answered clearly and unequivocally. The proposals for peace and an armistice come from a government which is free from every arbitrary and irresponsible influence and is supported by the overwhelming majority of the German nation.

(Signed) "SOLF."

"Berlin,
"October 20, 1918."

20.

EXTRACTS FROM THE SITTING OF THE REICHSTAG ON OCTOBER 22

(*a*) From the speech of the Imperial Chancellor, Prince Max:

"The last note from President Wilson has not cleared up the uncertainty of the German people as to what will be the end of the patent conflict of opinion. Perhaps the President's further reply will clear things up once and for all. Until then, gentlemen, all our thoughts and actions must be based on the two alternatives:

"1st—That the enemy Government want war so that we have no choice but to defend ourselves with the whole might of a nation that is driven into a corner. If we are faced with that necessity I have no doubt that the German Government will issue a summons to national defence in the name of the German people, just as it spoke in the name of the German people when it took steps for the restoration of the peace. Every man who came forward honourably for the principle of a peace of justice incurred an equally honourable obligation not to submit without fighting to a peace of violence. Any government which did not realize that would be abandoned to the contempt of our fighters and workers—it would be swept away by the fury of public opinion.

"Gentlemen, to-day we must also realize the full meaning of the second alternative. The German people must not be led blindly to the conference table. The nation has a right to ask the question: If we get a peace on the terms Wilson has put forward, what does that mean for our life and future? Judging from the echo of public opinion it was not before our reply to the questions of the President that the German people realized what was at stake. It now intends to see clearly. . . .

"But if we are to be allowed to develop peacefully along our own lines we must have the right to manage our own affairs. The enemy is at our doors. Our first and last thoughts go out to the heroes who are defending them against a manifold superiority, and whom we in turn must defend against unfair charges. Gentlemen, no one must think that our army can be calumniated without touching the honour of the nation. Evil deeds by individuals have occurred in every army, but they are repugnant to the fundamental principles of the nation in arms. When it was said that the spirit of the Red Cross is as much a part of a real army as the spirit of the offensive nowhere was there a louder echo of approval than in the circles of the army, and confirmation came from Christian soldiers in enemy countries who had fought against Germans.

"*Gentlemen, our soldiers are engaged in a terrible struggle to-day. They are fighting with anxiety about the homeland in their hearts; they are fighting while thinking of peace and they are holding fast. We thank them, we trust them, and we say to them: 'The Homeland will never leave you in the lurch! What we need and what we can give you in men, material and spirit, that you shall have.'*"

(*b*) From the speech of Deputy Herold:

"For more than four years our incomparable troops have been fighting heroically. The entire civil population has borne all its strivings and sufferings with the greatest spirit of sacrifice. The deep gratitude of the Fatherland for its unparalleled achievements is assured for all time. All countries are feeling the longing for peace. We have declared our willingness to accept a peace of justice and displayed more than a spirit of conciliation. But Germany's future must be safe. If the hand of peace is withdrawn a storm of indignation will sweep over the German Fatherland, and the entire nation with renewed enthusiasm will gather together all its might to help the army in the defence of the dear Fatherland.

A nation which can point to such wonderful achievements during the long years of war does not let itself be destroyed. A peace of justice and understanding is alone possible. *If we do not get it now, we must continue the war and fight for it. The summons to national defence will be issued. Old and young, the last man and every single woman in Germany will joyfully welcome any sacrifice which may help to save the Fatherland. We shall not fail.*"

21.

WILSON'S THIRD NOTE OF OCTOBER 23, 1918

"The President of the United States having received the solemn and explicit assurance of the German Government that it unreservedly accepts the terms of peace laid down in his address to the Congress of the United States on the 8th January, 1918, and the principles of settlement enunciated in his subsequent addresses, particularly the address of the 27th September, and that it desires to discuss the details of their application; and that this wish and purpose emanate not from those who have hitherto dictated German policy, and conducted the present war on Germany's behalf, but from Ministers who speak for the majority of the Reichstag and for an overwhelming majority of the German people; and having also received the further promise of the German Government that the laws of humanity and civilization will be observed both on land and sea by the German armed forces, the President of the United States feels that he can no longer decline to take up with the Governments with which the Government of the United States is associated the question of an armistice.

"He deems it his duty to say again, however, that the only armistice he would feel justified in submitting for consideration would be such a one which would leave the United States, and the Powers associated with her, in a position to

enforce any arrangements that had to be concluded, and to make renewal of hostilities on the part of Germany impossible.

"The President has, therefore, transmitted his correspondence with the present German authorities to the Governments with which the Government of the United States is associated as a belligerent, with the suggestion that, if those Governments are disposed to effect a peace upon the terms and principles indicated, their military advisers and those of the United States be invited to submit to the Governments associated against Germany the necessary terms of such an armistice as will fully protect the interests of the people involved and ensure to the associated Governments the unrestricted power to safeguard and enforce the details of the peace to which the German Government has agreed, provided they deem such an armistice possible. The acceptance of these armistice terms by Germany will afford the best concrete evidence that she supports the terms and principles of peace from which the whole action arises.

"The President would deem himself lacking in candour did he not point out in the frankest possible terms the reason why extraordinary safeguards must be demanded. Significant and important as the constitutional changes seem to be, which are spoken of by the German Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in his note of the 20th October, it does not appear that the principle of a government responsible to the German people has yet been fully accepted, or that any guarantees either exist or are in contemplation, or that the change of system and the carrying out of the measures now partially agreed upon will be permanent. Moreover, it does not appear that the heart of the present difficulty has been reached. It may be that future wars have been brought under control, but the present war has not been; and it is with the present war that we are dealing. It is evident that the German people have no means of commanding the acquiescence of the German military authorities in the popular will; that the

power of the King of Prussia to control the policy of the Empire is still unimpaired; that the determining initiative still remains with those who have hitherto been the masters of Germany.

"Feeling that the whole peace of the world now depends on plain speaking and straightforward action, the President deems it his duty to say, without any attempt to soften what may seem harsh words, that the nations of the world do not and cannot trust the word of those who have hitherto been the masters of German policy, and to point out once more that, in concluding peace and attempting to undo the infinite injuries and injustices of this war, the Government of the United States cannot deal with any but the representatives of the German people who offer better guarantees of a really constitutional attitude than the previous rulers of Germany.

"If it must now deal with the military masters and monarchical autocrats of Germany there can and must be only the prospect that later it will have to deal with them regarding the international obligations of the German Empire. If this is the case Germany cannot be permitted to discuss conditions of peace but must surrender. Nothing can be gained by leaving all these essential things unsaid.

(Signed) "LANSING."

22.

TELEGRAM FROM THE FIELD-MARSHAL AT 10 P.M. ON OCTOBER 24

"For the information of all troops.

"Wilson says in his answer that he intends to ask his allies to open negotiations for an armistice. The armistice, however, is bound to leave Germany so defenceless in a military sense that she will be unable to take up arms again. With Germany he would negotiate if she accepted in their entirety the demands which the allies make with regard to her internal

constitutional arrangements. The only other alternative is unconditional surrender.

"Wilson's answer demands military capitulation. It is therefore unacceptable to us soldiers. It is a proof that the determination of our enemies to destroy us, which in 1914 started the war, is unchanged. Moreover, it is a proof that our enemies use the words 'peace of justice' only to deceive us and break down our resistance. For us soldiers Wilson's reply can only be a summons to fight on with all our might. When the enemy realizes that the German front cannot be broken, whatever sacrifices they may make, they will be ready for the peace which will secure Germany's future for the broad masses of the nation.

(Signed) "VON HINDENBURG."

"Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army.
"No. O IV 19851/IV b.
"G.H.Q.,
"November 1, 1918.

"To my great regret I have learned that the Army Order which I issued on October 24 as a comment on the reply of President Wilson has been interpreted as conceived in deliberate opposition to the views of the Government or with a view to forcing the Government's hand.

"I therefore think it important to tell Your Grand-Ducal Highness how this Army Order came into existence and was made known at the Press Conference on October 25.

"After the reply of President Wilson was known at G.H.Q. on the morning of October 24 we had to consider how it should be explained to the troops. Its communication to the troops through the newspapers or wireless without any explanation had to be avoided. The competent authorities therefore drew up a definite telegram to the different Army Headquarters, a telegram based on expressions which had been used, according to telephonic reports, at a conference held

at the Foreign Office with representatives of the Press on October 24. At that conference Colonel von Haeften from the military standpoint, and Geheimrat von Stumm from the political, had made statements which were used as a basis for the telegram to the different Army Headquarters.

"The draft telegram was put before the First Quartermaster-General and myself with the statement that it embodied the views of the Government. Neither General Ludendorff nor myself therefore had any objection to issuing the telegram to the Army Headquarters.

"In the morning of October 25 the Director of the War Press Office asked for his instructions for the Press Conference to be held that day. He was told that the above-mentioned telegram on Wilson's note had been sent to the armies. He suggested that the contents of this telegram should be communicated confidentially (i.e., not for publication) to the Press representatives, because it was to be expected that they would learn the contents of the telegram from other sources and there would be a danger of its being published. As General Ludendorff and I were on our way to Berlin, the competent officer, without obtaining authority from us, gave his consent to the telegram in question being communicated confidentially at the Press Conference. He saw no objection to this course because he thought that the telegram reproduced the views of the Government. For the same reason the Director of the War Press Office omitted to obtain the express consent of the Government to the publication of the information.

"When I learnt at mid-day on October 25 that the assumption that the contents of the telegram represented the views of the Government was unfounded it was arranged that the telegram to the Army Headquarters should be held up.

"Your Grand-Ducal Highness will thus see that the issue of the telegram and its publication at the Press Conference

were the result of the assumption that we were acting in agreement with the Government, and that when it was ascertained that this was not the case action was immediately taken to limit the consequences of the mistake.

(Signed) "VON HINDENBURG,
"Field-Marshal."

23.

VICE-CHANCELLOR VON PAYER ON THE CONFERENCE AT 9 P.M. ON OCTOBER 25, 1918

"Von Payer came back to his discussion of yesterday with the officers of the Supreme Command. They had tried to convince him that the negotiations must be broken off and an effort must be made to summon the nation to arms by a proclamation to the Empire. He had adopted another point of view. . . . The officers in question had been of opinion that we could not negotiate any further. Our army was standing victoriously on hostile soil and must not capitulate. . . ."

AT THIS VERY MOMENT THE DISSOLUTION OF THE DUAL MONARCHY WAS MADE KNOWN IN VIENNA AND WITH THAT THE COLLAPSE OF THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN ARMY WAS SEALED.*

MY RESIGNATION FOLLOWED ON OCT. 26, 1918.

24.

OUR FOURTH NOTE OF OCTOBER 27

"The German Government has noted the reply of the President of the United States. The President knows the fundamental changes which have taken and are still taking

* Our late Ambassador in Vienna, Count Wedel, writes as follows in the "Hamburger Nachrichten" at the end of July, 1919. Austria held out until the autumn of 1918, and even then, in spite of her great sufferings, there were no reasons for her collapse. The Italian attacks had been beaten off, the Italians themselves were in a difficult situation, their cry for help was already resounding—in a word, we were in the very middle of a great triumph when the celebrated manifesto, so to speak, announced the dissolution of the Monarchy. Hungary immediately broke away, and with that the fate of the Monarchy was sealed.

place in the constitutional life of Germany. The peace negotiations will be carried on by a popular government in whose hands lies, in constitutional theory as in fact, the sovereign power. The military powers also are subject to it. The German Government now awaits the proposals for an armistice which shall herald a peace of justice such as the President has described in his declarations.

(Signed) "SOLF,
"Secretary of State
for Foreign Affairs."

25.

WILSON'S FOURTH NOTE OF NOVEMBER 5

"In my note of the 23rd October, 1918, I advised you that the President had transmitted his correspondence with the German authorities to the Governments with which the Government of the United States is associated, with the suggestion that, if these Governments were disposed to effect peace upon the terms and principles indicated, their military advisers and the military advisers of the United States be asked to submit to the Governments associated against Germany the necessary terms of such an armistice as would fully protect the interest of the peoples involved, and ensure to the Associated Governments the unrestricted power to safeguard and enforce the details of the peace to which the German Government had agreed, provided they deemed such an armistice possible from the military point of view.

"The President is now in receipt of a memorandum of observations by the Allied Governments on this correspondence, which is as follows:

> '... 'The Allied Governments have given careful consideration to the correspondence which has passed between the President of the United States and the German Government.

'Subject to the qualifications which follow, they declare their willingness to make peace with the Government of Germany on the terms of peace laid down in the President's address to Congress of 8th January, 1918, and the principles of settlement enunciated in his subsequent addresses. They must point out that what is usually described as the freedom of the seas is open to various interpretations, some of which they could not accept. They must, therefore, reserve to themselves complete freedom on this subject when they enter the Peace Conference.

'Further, in the conditions of peace laid down in his address to Congresss of the 8th January, 1918, the President declared that invaded territories must be restored as well as evacuated. The Allied Governments feel that no doubt ought to be allowed to exist as to what this provision implies. By it they understand that compensation will be made by Germany for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies and their property by the aggression of Germany by land, by sea, and from the air.'

"I am instructed by the President to say that he is in agreement with the interpretation set forth in the last paragraph of the memorandum above quoted. I am further instructed by the President to request you to notify the German Government that Marshal Foch has been authorized by the Government of the United States and the Allied Governments to receive properly accredited representatives of the German Government, and to communicate to them the terms of an armistice.

(Signed) "ROBERT LANSING."

C.

THE REVOLUTION FROM BELOW

At the beginning of November the revolution broke out from below in Germany. On the 9th His Majesty the Kaiser was betrayed by the Government of Prince Max. On November 11 followed the capitulation and the armistice.

The revolution above and below gave the German Army its death blow in its struggle with the enemy. Agitation had begun considerably earlier. In this matter different aspects are to be distinguished—I exclude hostile propaganda and Bolshevism. It ranges from *sabotage* in the moment of victory to the revolution itself. When the history of the catastrophe to Germany comes to be written it will have to be investigated from top to bottom. I can only give sidelights here.

In 1914 Walther Rathenau said: "The moment will never come in which the Kaiser, as conqueror of the world, will ride with his paladins through the Brandenburg Gate on white horses. On that day world history would have gone mad."

In 1915 Ströbel, a member of the Landtag, said: "I recognize quite frankly that the complete victory of the Empire would not be in the interests of Social Democracy."

A declaration by an Entente statesman: "It is perfectly plain to us that there are influential circles in Germany to whom nothing could be worse than a military victory for Ludendorff."

Extract from Pamphlet No. 9 of the Spartacist Union: "Even during the war the party, as the Spartacist Union, recognized the importance of the military propaganda. It saw its principal task in influencing, along revolutionary lines, the process of disintegration in progress within the military structure set up by the *bourgeoisie*. As far as was in the

power of the Spartacist Union it fulfilled that task during the war. The scope of its ambitions was extended with the ruin and dissolution of the old regular army and the simultaneous commencement of the struggle of the proletariat for political power. Side by side with the duty of destroying bourgeois militarism lay the task of popularizing the notion of a red army. The general political situation at the outbreak of the revolution led to the concentration of the revolutionary forces in a military sense. That in turn led to the establishment of a red 'Soldiers' Union.'"

Fikentscher, "Die Wahrheit über den Zusammenbruch der Marine"*: "On August 30, 1919, Haase, formerly in the navy, used the following words at a meeting of the radical Seamen's Union—'Ever since the beginning of the war, indeed early in 1915, we worked systematically for a revolution in the fleet. We each gave 50 pfennigs from our pay every ten days, got into touch with members of the Reichstag, drew up revolutionary leaflets, and had them printed and distributed in order to prepare the ground for the events of November.'"

General von Kuhl writes: "We clearly realized that the process of dissolution originated at home."

The Independent Social Democrat Vater, in a speech at Magdeburg in the winter of 1918–19:

"The revolution did not come as a surprise to us. We had been systematically preparing for it since January 25, 1918. . .! We induced our men who were going to the front to desert. We organized the deserters, supplied them with forged papers, money and unsigned pamphlets. We sent these men out in all directions, but principally to the front, in order that they should work on the feelings of the men at the front and bring about its dissolution. They persuaded the soldiers to desert and so the work of destruction was slowly but surely completed."

A declaration of the Under-Secretary of State to the

* "The Truth about the Collapse of the Navy." [Tr.]

Imperial Ministry of Justice, Dr. Oscar Kohn, on December 27, 1918:

"Is any formal statement or justification required that I was only too glad to receive the money which our Russian friends put at my disposal through Comrade Joffe for the purpose of the German revolution? . . ."

And a little further on:

"Comrade Joffe gave me the money in the night of November 5, 1918; this had nothing to do with the sums which he had previously stated had been disbursed for the purchase of arms. I applied the money to the purpose for which it was destined, that is, propagating the idea of a revolution, and my only regret is that circumstances have made it impossible for me to use it all. I hope that the time will soon come for me to render an account to our Russian friends."

D.

ENEMY OPINIONS ON THE END OF THE WAR

1.

Admiral Lord Fisher of Kilverstone says in his Memoirs that:

(*a*) General Plumer had told him that he personally had had an opportunity of convincing himself of the absolute efficiency of the German army at the moment of the armistice.

(*b*) At the Guildhall banquet on November 9, 1918, the Prime Minister did not know that within 36 hours the Germans would accept the most humiliating armistice terms that had ever been known . . . On the previous Sunday one of their foremost cabinet ministers had said that the four Allied Powers were on their last legs.

The late German Ambassador in Vienna, Count Wedel,

writes as follows in the "Hamburger Nachrichten" in July and August, 1919:

"Last autumn representatives of the Entente, Missions and Commissions poured into Vienna. As Italy had been regarded as the only real enemy the English, French and Americans were given a friendly reception. Natural social intercourse began. In one Viennese drawing-room I met a high English officer who asked to be introduced to me and drew me into conversation. It was all the easier for me because he spoke with great respect of Germany and expressed his admiration of the German army and its leaders. The thing which had impressed him most was our retreat in the late summer and autumn of 1918. He thought it had been led and carried out magnificently. The allies with their superior numbers had certainly forced back the German front, but when the fighting had been broken off that front had not been pierced, the strength of the German Army had not been broken, and in a military sense the allies had been deprived of the feeling of victory. It must not be forgotten that the armies of the allies also had become very exhausted with the hard fighting.

"The allies had not expected final victory until the spring of this year, after American reserves had been brought up and new tanks, etc., employed. It was for this reason that in England and France no one could bring themselves to believe in the defencelessness of Germany, but were reckoning with a possibility of a resumption of armed resistance. Germany had certainly lost a large proportion of her war material, but with such leaders and men she could not be defenceless, and the resumption of the struggle after any considerable interval would mean a serious problem even to the allies.

"He said he was carefully following the German Press and had noticed that these anxieties of the allies were considered to be hypocritical. He could guarantee, however, that they were not a sham, but that such possibilities were actually

reckoned with. He saw from the German papers that the defencelessness of the country was attributed to the revolution. He could not understand that. Austria had become defenceless as a result of the collapse of the State, but history taught us that a revolution had by itself never made a nation defenceless. Cromwell had regarded the organization of the army as his most vital task and the Puritans controlled an army such as the sovereigns of England had never had. In the same way the States General of the Netherlands, which also came into existence by revolution, had created a model army. French revolutionaries of 1789 had immediately set to work to maintain and increase the army and by that means alone were they able successfully to beat off all attacks of foreign enemies. It was with this army that Napoleon had conquered half the world. Even Kerensky and Lenin had taken steps to maintain the army. Revolutionary States were not popular owing to the danger of infection to their neighbours, and the instinct of self-preservation alone compelled them to take thought for defence against foreign countries. The allies could not be blamed if they suspected a trap behind the alleged German defencelessness. He, himself, could not bring himself to believe in the defencelessness of Germany."

2.

An American Opinion from the "Deutsche Tageszeitung":

"The 'Illinois State Times' of July 29, 1919, is in a position to give a statement by the American Colonel F. L. Huidekober from a report of General Pershing's Headquarters in which it was stated that in November, 1918, the American operations were faced with an imminent deadlock. 'They had used up the number of available trained reinforcements much faster than could be made good by the reinforcements sent out from home.' The failure of the transports and Lines of Communication service, the deplorable

management of the supply question, the shortage of food and shelter for the weary troops in the firing line 'had so disastrous an influence on their fighting efficiency that, as was said, they could only be used as an offensive instrument for another month at the most.' Pershing's General Staff officers admitted that the German defence had been more successful than the American offensive, which would have spent itself through loss of blood before they had finished off their opponents."

3.

Major-General Sir Frederick Maurice, in his book "The Last Four Months," says that the reason for the acceptance of the armistice by Foch was because the advance necessary for the destruction of the German army was impossible, as the previous advance had put an almost intolerable strain on the supply and transport of the Allies.

Foch was therefore forced either to conclude an armistice or give the German army time to recover.

4.

See Chapter VI.

CHAPTER XVII

THE WAR AIMS OF OUR ENEMIES

Many Germans still think that a peace of understanding was possible. With a view to clearing their minds on this matter I am giving in this book the war aims of the Entente, so far as they have become known through the publication of treaties. The treaties between England and France, in particular, are still in the archives.

1. Paris, December 31, 1919.
2. Ribot in the French Chamber.
3. The Treaty of England, France and Russia with Italy on April 26, 1915.
4. The Treaty of Rumania with the Entente of August 4, 1916, prior to her entry into the war.
5. Extracts from the Russian Press on the subject of Constantinople and the Straits, November 23, 1917.
6. Russian memorandum on the question of Asia Minor, published in "Isvestia," November 24, 1917.
7. Secret compact with regard to Syria.
8. The economic aims of the Entente.

I.

PARIS, DECEMBER 31, 1919

"Humanité" published on November 3 a report of Isaac Don Levine, which he had sent from Berlin to his paper ("The Chicago Daily News"). It refers to the third part of a dispatch of November 23, which the French Ambassador

Paléologue had sent, and in which the terms of peace are given which had been worked out by the Czar Nicholas on the advice of Sasonoff, his Minister for Foreign Affairs. "Humanité" declares that these revelations are a proof that the Peace Conference in Paris acted in accordance with the dictates of this diplomat. In the dispatch it was said that Austria-Hungary could hardly be allowed to remain intact. Bohemia would demand her independence so that Austria would keep only the German Tyrol and the province of Salzburg. As regards Germany, Russia would annex what was formerly Poland and a part of East Prussia. France was to get back Alsace-Lorraine and perhaps extend her frontiers to include the Rhine Province. Belgium must receive an important accession of territory in the direction of Aix la Chapelle. France and England must divide the German colonies and, finally, Schleswig-Holstein and the zone of the Kiel Canal were assigned to Denmark.

At the conference in which the Czar had developed this programme Paléologue had declared that Delcassé was in agreement with the Czar on all points. He had then asked the Czar what was to be done with Hanover, and the Czar had replied that if a small independent State were set up between Prussia and Western Europe it would be in the interests of peace. The Czar had added:

"Our proceedings will only receive the approval of history if inspired by a higher ideal, I mean the thought of assuring the peace of the world for a very long time."

The French Ambassador had then asked: "Would not that mean the end of the German Empire?" The telegram breaks off at this point. The next word is with Paris. "Humanité" adds that the secret archives of the Quai d'Orsay could clear up the matter entirely, and would also reveal that Russia had demanded the possession of Constantinople.

2.

RIBOT IN THE FRENCH CHAMBER

On July 30, 1917, in the French Chamber, Ribot demanded the annexation of the Saar district and the establishment of a buffer State on the left bank of the Rhine.

This agrees with the attitude of President Poincaré on the occasion of his discussion with Prince Sixtus of Parma-Bourbon. (See Chapter XI.)

3.

THE TREATY OF ENGLAND, FRANCE AND RUSSIA WITH ITALY ON APRIL 26, 1915

("Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung" of December 3, 1917, No. 364.)

According to a report from Stockholm, the "Pravda" on the 28th continues the publication of the secret documents, and gives the treaty which England, France and Russia made with Italy to secure the help of Italy for the Entente. We give the following extracts:

"The Italian Ambassador in London, Marquis Imperiali, has the honour, in accordance with instructions from his Government, to communicate the following documents to the Secretary of State, Sir E. Grey, Monsieur Cambon, the French Ambassador in London, and Count Benckendorff, the Russian Ambassador in London:

"Article IV. On the future conclusion of peace Italy shall receive: The Trentino, the whole of Southern Tyrol up to its natural frontier, which is to be considered as the Brenner, the town and district of Trieste, the district of Gorizia and Gradiska, the whole of Istria as far as Quarnero, with the Istrian islands and Luccine, as well as the small islands of Pladuiod, Unie, Cacci, Doli, Palazzuola, San Pietro di Nembi,

Asinello and Gruica and the adjacent districts" (an appendix gives the frontier in greater detail).

"Article V. Italy is to receive the province of Dalmatia as at present delimited, with the addition of Lissarica and Trebinia in the north, and in the south the whole region up to a line drawn due east from the shore at Cape Plankala to the watershed, whereby all the valleys of the rivers which flow into the Sebenico come into Italy's possession—that is, Cicolo, Cara and Butisluza, with all their rivers. To Italy are assigned all the islands which lie north and west of the coast of Dalmatia, etc.

"Article VI. Italy receives Valona, the island of Sasseno and a hinterland which is large enough to secure this possession in a military sense—as a suggestion, between the river Vopiza in the north and east and the frontier of the district of Chimara in the south.

"Article VIII. Italy receives all the islands of the Dodecanese now in her occupation, with full sovereign rights.

"Article XI. Italy shall receive a proportion of the war indemnity which corresponds to her sacrifices and efforts.

"Article XIII. If the colonial possessions of England and France in Africa are extended at the cost of Germany, France and England in principle recognize Italy's right to ask for compensation in the form of an extension of her possessions in Eritrea, Somaliland, Libia and the regions adjacent to the colonies belonging to France and England.

"Article XIV. France, England and Russia undertake an obligation to support Italy in preventing the Holy See from taking any diplomatic steps with a view to peace or the settlement of any questions connected with the present war.

"Article XVI. This treaty shall be kept secret. As regards Italy's adhesion to the declaration of September 5, 1915, the fact shall only be published when Italy declares war or has received a declaration of war."

4.

THE TREATY OF RUMANIA WITH THE ENTENTE OF AUGUST 4, 1916, PRIOR TO HER ENTRY INTO THE WAR

("Le Temps," No. 21031, of February 4, 1919.)

"Article III. France, Great Britain, Italy and Russia recognize the right of Rumania to annex the territory of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy which is delimited in Article IV." (The frontier of Rumania is to be advanced across Transylvania to the Theiss.—The Author.)

"The new frontier begins on the Pruth at a point of the present Russo-Rumanian frontier near Novoselitza; it follows that river up-stream to its junction with the Seremos, then the frontier of Galicia with the Bukovina and that of Galicia with Hungary as far as the Stoy (Hill 1655). From that point it follows the watershed of the Theiss and the Vizo until it reaches the Theiss at the village of Trebusa, and proceeds as far as the junction of the Theiss and the Vizo. From that point it follows the valley of the Theiss down-stream to 4 kilometres north of its junction with the Szamos. The village of Vasaros-Naminy is assigned to Rumania. From there the frontier runs in a direction SSW. to a point 6 kilometres east of the town of Debreczim. From that point it reaches the Krisch, 3 kilometres short of the junction of the White and Swift Krisch. It reaches the Theiss at a point on a level with the village of Algye north of Szegedin, passing west of the villages of Oroshaza and Bekessamson. Three kilometres from the latter it makes a small bend, starting from Algye. The line of the frontier then proceeds along the valley of the Theiss as far as its junction with the Danube, and then along the valley of the Danube to the present frontier of Rumania. Rumania undertakes not to construct any fortresses against Belgrade in a zone still to be settled, and

to keep only police forces in that zone. The Rumanian Government pledges itself to indemnify the Serbs who desire to emigrate within two years of the conclusion of peace.

"Article V. Rumania of the one part, France, Great Britain, Italy and Russia of the other, bind themselves not to make a separate peace.

"France, Great Britain, Italy and Russia agree that in the Treaty of Peace the territories of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy referred to in Article IV. of this treaty shall be annexed to the Crown of Rumania.

"Article VII. The contracting Powers bind themselves to keep the present agreement secret until the conclusion of a general peace."

This political compact was supplemented by a military convention.

5.

EXTRACTS FROM THE RUSSIAN PRESS ON THE SUBJECT OF CONSTANTINOPLE AND THE STRAITS

("Isvestia" of November 23, 1917.)

Memorandum.

On March 4, 1915, the Minister for Foreign Affairs handed the French and British Ambassadors a memorandum embodying Russia's wishes with regard to the incorporation of the following areas as a result of the present war: the town of Constantinople, the west coast of the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmora and the Dardanelles, Southern Thrace as far as the Enos–Midia line, the coast of Asia Minor between the Bosphorus, the river Sakaria and a point on the Gulf of Ismid to be fixed later, the islands in the Sea of Marmora and the islands of Imbros and Tenedos. The special rights of France and England within the boundaries of the said areas shall remain intact.

Both the French and English Governments have declared their agreement with the satisfaction of our desires, on condition that the war is brought to a victorious conclusion and that a whole series of French and English claims, both with regard to the Ottoman Empire and other regions, shall be satisfied. These claims are as follows, so far as Turkey is concerned:

Constantinople to be recognized as a free port for the transit of goods other than those coming from and going to Russia, and free passage for commercial vessels to be allowed through the Straits.

Recognition of the rights of England and France in Asiatic Turkey, such rights to be defined in detail in the separate agreement between France, England and Russia.

Preservation of the Holy Places of Islam and Arabia under independent Mahometan rule.

Inclusion in the English sphere of influence of the neutral zone in Persia established by the Anglo-Russian Agreement of the year 1907.

6.

RUSSIAN MEMORANDUM ON THE QUESTION OF ASIA MINOR

("Isvestia" of November 24, 1917.)

March 6, 1917.

As a result of the negotiations which took place in London and Petrograd in the spring of 1916, the allied Governments of England, France and Russia have come to an agreement with regard to the future delimitation of their respective spheres of influence and territorial acquisitions in Asiatic Turkey, as well as with regard to the formation of an independent Arab Empire or a confederation of Arab States within the existing boundaries of Arabia.

The general outlines of this compact are as follows:

Russia receives the provinces of Erzerum, Trebizond, Van

and Bitlis as well as the region of Southern Kurdistan as far as the line Muscha–Seer–Ibn–Omar–Amadia–the Persian frontier. The extreme point of Russian territory on the coast of the Black Sea will be a point west of Trebizond which shall be fixed more definitely later.

France receives the coast of Syria, the vilayet of Adana and an area which is bounded on the south by the line Aintab–Mardin as far as the future Russian frontier, and on the north by the line Ala-dag–Caesarea–Ak-dag–Aldys-dag–Saar–Ogin–Kharput.

England receives the southern part of Mesopotamia with Baghdad and retains the ports of Haifa and Akka in Syria.

In accordance with an agreement between France and England the zone between the French and British regions will form a confederation of Arab States or an independent Arab Empire. This and the respective spheres of influence shall be delimited later.

Alexandretta will be declared a free port.

With a view to securing the religious interests of the allied countries Palestine with the Holy Places will cease to form part of the Turkish Empire and be subjected to a special regime in accordance with a treaty between Russia, France and England.

As a general principle the contracting Powers mutually pledge themselves to respect concessions and privileges in force before the war in the territory acquired by them.

They have agreed to take over the part of the Turkish debt corresponding to their territorial acquisition.

7.

SECRET COMPACT WITH REGARD TO SYRIA

1. A British promise, dated October 24, 1915, to the then King Hussein of Mecca—that is, at the time of the first British thrust towards Baghdad. The English pledged themselves

to recognize the independence of the Arabs south of the 37th degree of latitude, with the exception of the provinces of Baghdad and Basra. For the two latter provinces "special measures of administrative control by British interests will be required." Further, in the agreement the independent Arab zone is limited by "areas where Great Britain is not free to act without injuring the interests of France." This agreement is made by Sir Henry McMahon.

2. Agreement between France and England of May, 1916, i.e., after the fall of Kut-el-Amara. This compact divides the Arabian provinces of Turkey into five zones:

(*a*) Palestine from the Jordan to the Mediterranean shall be "international."

(*b*) Haifa and Mesopotamia from Tekrit (approximately) to the Persian Gulf shall be British.

(*c*) The Syrian coast from Tyre to Alexandretta in addition to Cilicia and Southern Armenia from Sivas to Diarbekir shall be French.

(*d*) The interior, and more particularly the vilayets of Aleppo, Damascus, Urfa, Dier-el-Zor and Mosul, shall be "independent Arab."

For the independent Arab zone the following provisions shall apply:

I. Between the line Akaba–Koweit and Haifa–Tekrit the French will not attempt to exercise any political influence, while England claims economic "priority" and the right to supply the Arabs with the advisers for which they have asked her.

II. Between the line Haifa–Tekrit and the southern corner of French Armenia (Kurdistan) Great Britain renounces all political influence and France is granted the right set out in Clause 1 above.

As a special curiosity this compact, the authors of which treat geography and local economics as a bull would treat a

china-shop, contained a provision that the Baghdad railway shall not be completed before a new Euphrates railway (in French interests) has been constructed.

3. An English agreement with the Seven Syrians of Cairo (the Syrian Committee of Independence), dated June 11, 1917. In this it is agreed that the pre-war Arab states and regions which have been freed from Turkish rule during the war by the military efforts of their inhabitants shall be absolutely independent.

4. The Franco-British Agreement of November 9, 1918. In this Great Britain and France agreed to "encourage" the native Governments in Syria and Mesopotamia and, without putting pressure on them, help these governments, which will have been chosen by the people themselves, to establish stable rule.

8.

THE ECONOMIC AIMS OF THE ENTENTE

See the speeches of the enemy statesmen in Paris and London, and particularly "The War Policy of the Party in the Light of Economic Facts: An Appeal to Thinking Men!"* published by the committee of the German Social Democratic Party.

* Translated.

THE END

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